SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

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John Charles Viscount Althorp,

aged 4 years.

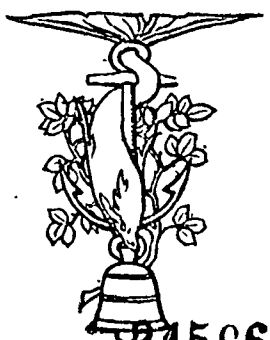
From the picture in the possession of Earl Spencer K.G.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

HIS LIFE AND ART

BY

LORD RONALD SUTHERLAND GOWER, F.S.A.



LONDON
GEORGE BELL AND SONS
1902

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

"Those who are determined to excel must go to their work, whether willing or unwilling, morning, noon, and night; and they will find it to be no play, but, on the contrary, very hard labour."

Sir Joshua Reynolds.

"Those great Masters, who have travelled the same road, with success, are most likely to conduct others to success."

Sir Joshua Reynolds.

"Sir Joshua Reynolds, sir, is the most invulnerable man I know. The man with whom, if you should quarrel, you would find the most difficult to abuse."

Dr Johnson.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

I DESIRE to express my very hearty thanks to all those persons who, by allowing me to see the pictures by Sir Joshua Reynolds which they possess, and by permitting me to have their treasures photographed, have aided so largely in my work on this book. My thanks are specially due to Mrs Thwaites for the privilege of photographing her famous picture of the Ladies Waldegrave; to Lady Colomb and Sir R. Edgcumbe for similar special favours with respect to Sir Joshua's letters, drawings and relics; to the Duke of Rutland, the Earl of Crewe, and Earl Spencer; the Earl of Chichester and the Earl of Northbrook; the Earl of St Germans and Lord Chesham; and to Mr Aubrey Harcourt. I am also most grateful to Sir R. Edgcumbe for kindly reading over the pages of this volume in proof, and for his valuable suggestions. To every one who has helped me, in what has been a most interesting work, I return my sincere thanks.

RONALD SUTHERLAND GOWER.

HAMMERFIELD, PENSHURST,
May 1902.

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N.B.—*The Illustrations from the pictures belonging to the Duke of Devonshire, Earl Spencer, the Earl of Crewe, the Earl of Chichester, and Lord Chesham, and Mr Aubrey Harcourt, and of the relics belonging to Lady Colomb and Sir R. Edgcumbe, are from photographs, specially taken for this book, by kind permission of the owners.*

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

CHAPTER I

PARENTAGE AND EARLY YEARS

1723-1752

THE first President of the English Royal Academy, and the father, as he has justly been called, of the English School of portrait painting, came of a very literary stock of Devonshire worthies. Reynolds' father and grandfather and two of his uncles were in holy orders. Samuel Reynolds, Joshua's father, had been a scholar at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and a Fellow of Balliol.

Joshua's uncle, John Reynolds, the elder brother of Samuel, was Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, and also a Fellow of Eton; another uncle, Joshua Reynolds, after whom the future President was named, was a Fellow of Corpus Christi, Oxford, and also Bursar to that college. Besides these, Reynolds' cousins had filled Fellowships both at Eton and Oxford.

Reynolds' father was born in 1680. In 1702 he took his degree at Oxford, and, wishing to marry, after he had held a Fellowship at Balliol for nine years, he accepted the headmastership of Plympton Grammar School, a school founded in 1658 by the patriotic Serjeant Sir John Maynard, one of the many worthies of Devon; for Sir John was not only a distinguished lawyer, but was

possessed also of a ready wit. Of him the story is told that when William III. met him soon after his arrival in England, the Prince of Orange, alluding to Sir John's advanced age—he was in his eighty-seventh year—remarked that he must have outlived all the lawyers of his day. To this Sir John replied, "Yes; and if your Highness had not come over to our assistance, I should have outlived the law too."

Samuel Reynolds' wife was Theophila Potter; she came of an old Devon family which belonged to Iddesleigh. On her mother's side she was connected with the Iltons of Somerset, one of whom was a Bishop of Norwich.

In Sir Robert Edgcumbe's interesting volume on the family connections of Sir Joshua Reynolds, he suggests that the literary trend of Reynolds' parentage explains the future President's predilection for the men of letters of his time, and his love for the society of men of literary culture, such as Johnson, Goldsmith, and Burke, in preference to that of his fellow-painters.

Samuel Reynolds' marriage was a happy and prolific one. Mrs Reynolds bore him many children, some ten in all, of whom Joshua was the third son; many of his brothers and sisters died in their infancy. Joshua was born on the 16th of July 1723. A curious mistake was made in registering the infant's name, for in the registry of the church at Plympton is written: "1723, Joseph, son of Samuel Reynolds, clerk, baptised July 30th." And further on is written: "In the entry of Baptism for the year 1723, the person by mistake named Joseph, son of Samuel Reynolds, clerk, baptized July 30th, was Joshua Reynolds, the celebrated painter, who died Feb. 23rd, 1792."

Joshua's eldest sister, Mary, who became the wife of John Palmer, had a turn for authorship; she survived her

famous brother. Another sister, Elizabeth, born in 1720, died at the age of forty-five; she had married William Johnson of Torrington. Yet another sister, Frances, born in 1729, lived till 1808. There were also three younger ones, who died in infancy. Among living descendants of Sir Joshua's sisters are Lady Colomb, wife of Sir John Colomb, M.P.; Admiral Sir William Dowell; Mr Temple Blackwood; Admiral Knyvet Wilson, V.C.; William Palmer, Black Rod, Melbourne, Victoria; Lord Torrington; and Sir Robert Edgcumbe.

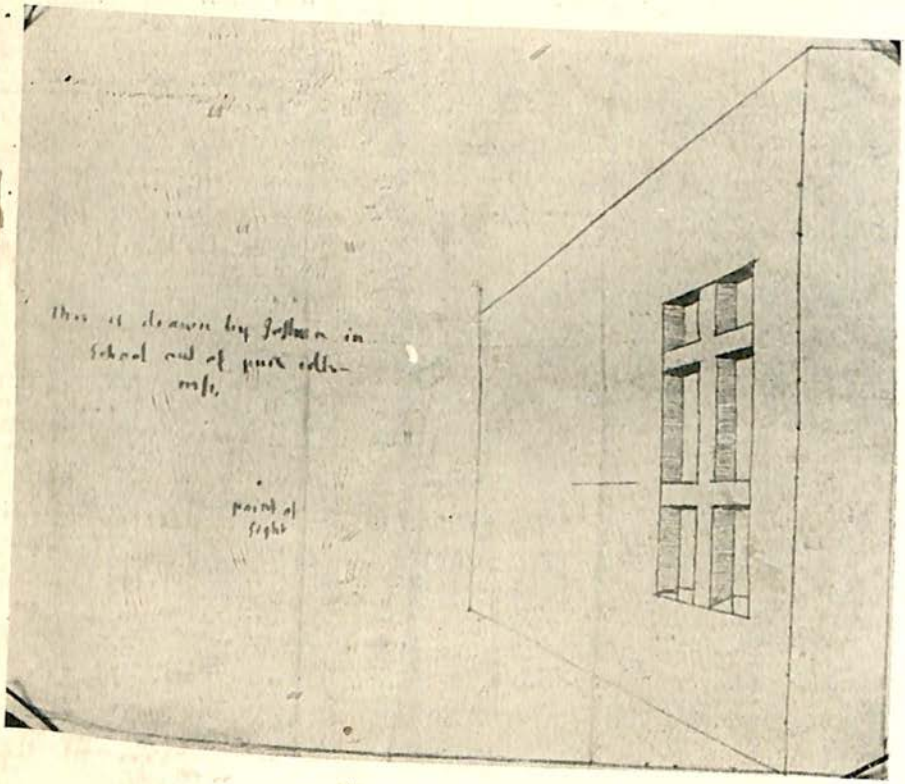
Sir Joshua's native town, Plympton Earl, to give it its full title, lies some five miles to the east of Plymouth, near the old high road between that town and Exeter. Much changed is the birth-town of the great painter, but it still boasts the picturesque old Grammar School, around which is a picturesque stone colonnade, little altered since the days when Joshua learnt his lessons under the waggon-shaped wooden roof on its first floor. Plympton might be called the nursing-mother of the triple towns of Plymouth, Stonehouse, and Devonport, for what in Reynolds' early years were three distinct towns have now become one huge whole, with a population of over two hundred thousand. It was owing to the great French war that these were brought together; much in the same way as the war in South Africa at the close of the last century has welded our motherland with her colonial children. While Plymouth and its tributaries have increased by leaps and bounds, little Plympton has remained stationary, and seems to have fallen asleep; as lifeless as the ruins of its old Augustinian Priory, and its only interest now is owing to its having given birth to one of the greatest of great Masters in the annals of English art.

When famous, and many years after he had made his home in London, Sir Joshua never forgot his native Plympton, and would dwell on the memory of his child-

hood and youth there with affection. Northcote relates that on one occasion, when talking with him of Plympton, Reynolds told him that he loved every stone of it.

In the summer of 1809 Wilkie, accompanied by his friend Haydon, made a pilgrimage to what the former called "the shrine of Reynolds," and that enthusiastic young Scottish painter saw, in a room in the schoolhouse in which tradition said Sir Joshua had been born, a childish drawing of a head, apparently drawn with a finger dipped in ink, which, although a very juvenile performance, Wilkie thought had some traces of the Master's style about it. Wilkie and Haydon also visited the Guildhall in the High Street of Plympton, where they saw a good portrait of Reynolds by himself and two portraits by him of naval officers, painted before his visit to Italy; these, Haydon wrote, "were as fine as he ever did afterwards." They also saw in a house in the town, belonging to a Mrs Mayo, a fine portrait of an old man by Sir Joshua, which the owner valued so highly that she would only allow the dust to be blown off the canvas with a pair of bellows by the housemaid, but that indefatigable destroyer of all things mundane succeeded on one occasion in thrusting the bellows through the precious canvas.

Nine years after Wilkie's visit to Plympton, another painter, whose writings are perhaps more valuable than his paintings, C. E. Leslie, visited Reynolds' birthplace, and in his masterly life of Sir Joshua he alludes to the delight he felt at the beauty of that part of Devonshire. Mr Phillips, the schoolmaster at Sir Joshua's old school, told him, on the occasion of his visit, that the early drawing or ink sketch by Reynolds, with some others which Wilkie had seen, had been covered up with a coat of whitewash; and that a former schoolmaster had cut out of a window the pane on which Sir Joshua had written his name; acts of vandalism only excelled by the sale of



PERSPECTIVE DRAWING DONE BY REYNOLDS WHEN A LAD,
WITH HIS FATHER'S NOTE UPON IT
(*By permission of Lady Colomb*)

Sir Joshua's portrait of himself which his unworthy fellow-townsmen had sold some years before out of their Guild-hall.

In 1861, Tom Taylor, who finished and edited the incomplete biography of Reynolds commenced by Leslie, also visited the shrine of Reynolds. Taylor found the old Grammar School closed for repairs; and Reynolds' birthplace entirely altered, only the old stone arcade under the Grammar School being unchanged.

When the present writer visited Plympton he found a brand new building on the site of the old schoolhouse. But although the Grammar School has been restored it is still much in the same state as when little Joshua Reynolds played and sketched in its colonnade, or wrote his Latin verses and construed in the old schoolroom above. There are two views given in Leslie and Taylor's "Life of Reynolds" of this building; one of these is taken from the exterior, showing the handsome Gothic window, with its fine tracery; the other the stone colonnade, with its massive stone columns and pointed arches, like some Moorish mosque.

One of Joshua's earliest attempts at learning drawing was copying prints and studying a work called "The Jesuit's Perspective;" and it is recorded that when only seven years old he made a drawing of this colonnade, at the back of a Latin exercise, "De Labore." The parent dominie wrote below this architectural effort of his boy, "This is drawn by Joshua in school out of pure idleness." Later on, however, Samuel Reynolds, on seeing another drawing by Joshua, in which he had drawn the school building, in admirable perspective according to the rules laid down in the Jesuit's book of perspective, expressed his pleasure at the accuracy of his son's handiwork.

Samuel Reynolds appears to have been a somewhat

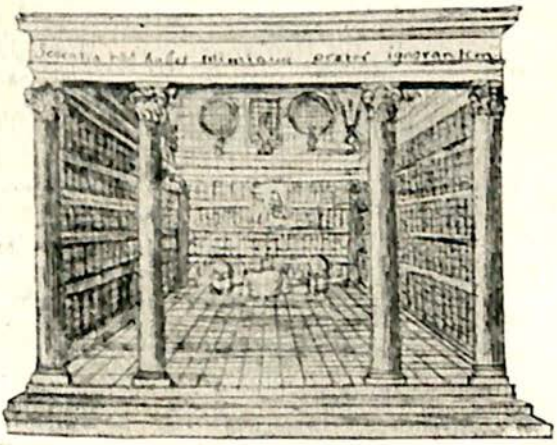
eccentric old gentleman; he was a most unsuccessful schoolmaster, for under his tuition the scholars at Plympton Grammar School dwindled down to one solitary pupil. Old Mr Reynolds is said to have recalled Parson Adams in appearance and character, in ways and conversation; and so absent-minded was he that on one occasion, while on horseback, he dropped one of his boots, and did not discover the circumstance until he dismounted.

Geniuses have often owed much of their talents to their mothers, but with Reynolds I can find no indication of extraordinary intellect in his mother; Mrs Reynolds is but a name, for nothing has come down to us regarding her personality. Two, however, of Reynolds' sisters had artistic as well as literary ability, Malone recording that Reynolds told him two of his first artistic efforts were in copying some sketches made by them.

Among his father's few books young Joshua found some with illustrations, and among them were an illustrated Plutarch, edited by Dryden; and Jacob Cats' "Book of Emblems," illustrated by spirited engravings, which Reynolds copied with delight. The latter was supposed to have been brought from Holland by a Dutch grandmother of Joshua's on his father's side.

In after years a sister of the President said that when they were children her brother was not able to afford to buy pencils and drawing paper, but used a burnt stick in lieu of these, with which he would daub on the white-washed wall of a passage in her father's house, or on the wall of the Grammar School—the other boys imitating him so well that in some cases they succeeded better than Joshua did in these artistic productions, and called him by the uncomplimentary epithet of "the clown."

A somewhat dreary work relating to the principles of Art was then much in vogue; it was by Richardson, and



[*Lady Colomb*

SKETCH OF THE INTERIOR OF A LIBRARY, MADE BY REYNOLDS WHEN A LAD

(*Full size*)

[*Lady Colomb*

ONE OF SIR JOSHUA'S MOTHER-O'-PEARL COUNTERS, WITH MONOGRAM DEVISED BY THE ARTIST.

called a "Treatise on Painting." It appears strange that two of our great painters should have been influenced by this dull book, for both Hogarth and Reynolds acknowledged their obligation to Richardson's writing. It was no less a critical authority than Samuel Johnson who believed that this book had been the principal cause of Reynolds' love of art; and the latter told Malone that he had been charmed with the "Treatise," which had revealed to his mind the fact of Raphael's superiority "to the most illustrious names of ancient or modern times."

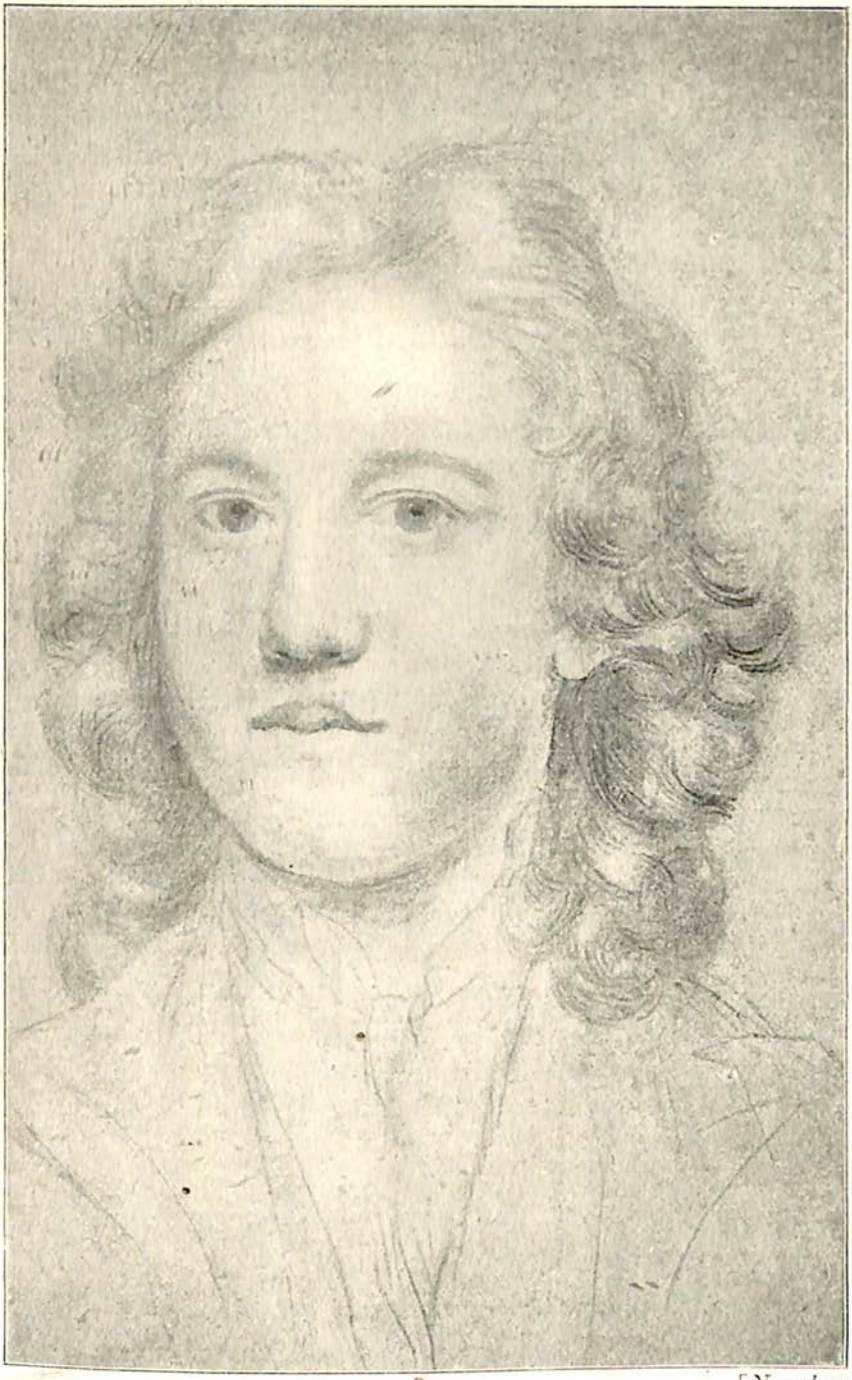
In his twelfth year Reynolds painted his first portrait, a life-size head in oils of Parson Smart, who was a tutor to Richard Edgcumbe, son of the first Lord Edgcumbe, the friend and correspondent of Horace Walpole, and who succeeded to the barony. The earldom of Mount Edgcumbe was created, in 1789, in favour of his younger brother George, third Baron Edgcumbe. Joshua painted this portrait in a boat-house at a place called Cremyll, on the beach below the beautifully wooded hill on which stands the seat of Mount Edgcumbe, one of the loveliest spots in all England. A more picturesque place for the first essay of the future President of the Royal Academy could not be found in Great Britain. Joshua is said to have painted this head of the reverend tutor on a piece of sail canvas with a shipwright's colours, and, to judge by the roughness of the colour and the canvas, there is reason to believe in the truth of the legend. It is believed to have been an excellent likeness of the round-faced cleric, who appears to be preaching. Young Dick Edgcumbe, Joshua Reynolds' playfellow, is said by local tradition to have induced his friend to make this portrait of Parson Smart after a thumb-nail sketch done by Reynolds during the Parson's sermon, much as did Hogarth and Wilkie. This earliest portrait by Reynolds belonged for many years to Lord Edgcumbe, by whom it was

given to Mr Boger. Lord St. Germans, who inherited it, keeps it in his house near Port Eliot.

Young Reynolds saw a good deal of the Edgcumbe family; and the friendship which commenced with that house in his childhood lasted throughout his long life. It was owing to Lord Edgcumbe's advice that Reynolds was induced to try his fortune as an artist in London. He was his earliest patron and his faithful friend; and the friendship was a happy event to both the painter and the house of Mount Edgcumbe, for there is nothing more precious in that beautiful home than Sir Joshua's portraits of three generations of the family.

Four years passed after Reynolds had painted his head of Parson Smart on the beach at Mount Edgcumbe before it was decided by his parents that he should make art his profession. In Leslie's life of the Master a series of letters are given, written by Samuel Reynolds to an attorney friend of his at Bideford, named Cutcliffe, relating to Joshua's prospects and future career. In these letters there occurs the name of a Mr Craunch, a Plymptonian, who appears to have predicted the future success of young Joshua, and to have shown him much kindness.

At length Craunch persuaded Joshua's father to apply to the portrait painter Hudson; then considered, poor limner that he was, the head of that branch of the art. The letter which decided Joshua's vocation in life is dated March 1740, when Joshua was seventeen years of age; and it is an interesting circumstance that it was during that year that Reynolds drew the admirable life-size head of himself in black chalk on blue paper, which, many years after the Master's death, his niece, Lady Thomond, gave to Lord Harcourt, and which is to be seen to this day at Nuneham; probably the earliest likeness of Reynolds, who was nearly as fond of self-



[*Newnham*

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS AT THE AGE OF NINETEEN

(*By special permission of Mr Aubrey Harcourt*)

portraiture as the great Rembrandt, that exists; and which, by the kindness of Mr Aubrey Harcourt, I have been allowed to reproduce in this work.

On the last day of that year old Mr Reynolds writes to Cutcliffe that it is settled that Joshua is to be apprenticed to Hudson, in London. After his return from Italy, Reynolds, in gratefulness for Craunch's help in getting him this introduction to Hudson's studio, painted Craunch's portrait and those of others of his family; portraits which after Craunch's death became the property of Lord Vivian, and are, I believe, still to be seen at Glynn in Cornwall. Old Mr Reynolds wrote to Craunch that he was "divided between two things; one was making him (Joshua) an apothecary or a painter!"

Thomas Hudson was also a Devonian. He had studied under Richardson, whose treatise on painting had so greatly influenced Reynolds. Hudson had married the former's daughter, and they lived at 55, Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn—a quarter much in vogue with artists.

It was arranged that Joshua was to pay a pension of one hundred and twenty pounds a year to Hudson, half of which sum was paid by his father, the other half being advanced by his sister, Mrs Palmer. At first all seemed to go on smoothly with Reynolds under the roof of the Hudsons. Two years after leaving Plympton for London Joshua's father writes to a friend; "As for Joshua, nobody, by his letters to me, was ever better pleased in his employment, in his master, in everything. 'While I am doing this, I am the happiest creature alive,' is his expression." The term of Joshua's apprenticeship to Hudson was one of four years; but he only remained with him for half that time. It has never been satisfactorily explained why Reynolds left Hudson before half his term of apprenticeship had expired. Artists are proverbially a *gens irritabilis*, and for some unknown reason

master and pupil fell out. Perhaps the cause of the sudden end of their connection was that Hudson had discovered the far superior talent of his pupil to his own. But whatever the cause of the rupture between them, Reynolds abruptly left London, and returned to his father's home in the summer of 1743. While in London he had a glimpse of Alexander Pope, in an auction room, where the inspired humpback was surrounded by a crowd of admirers as he passed into and from the room. Joshua pushed his way into the throng, and to his delight was able just to touch the poet's hand. He was found of telling afterwards his impression of the little great man, who appeared to him about four feet six inches high, very hump-backed; what especially struck Reynolds in Pope were his wonderfully brilliant eyes. It is interesting for the author to remember that Lady Carlisle (his grandmother), had been painted in her childhood by Sir Joshua, who in his youth had seen and touched the hand which had written "The Rape of the Lock."

On his return to Devonshire, Reynolds commenced portrait painting at what was then called Plymouth Dock, —now Devonport; and had many a commission given him by naval officers and their wives; and there he painted at least a score of portraits, according to a letter written about him by his father at this time. At the close of 1744 Reynolds was back in London.

The first portrait that we hear of painted by him at this period was that of Captain Hamilton, the father of the first Marquis of Abercorn, which is still in the collection of his descendant, the Duke of Abercorn. It is interesting to know that in later life Sir Joshua on seeing this portrait, painted by him when only twenty-three years old, was surprised by its excellence.

At this time he also painted a small group of the Eliot family—his neighbours at Port Eliot—which still

Walker & Cockerell photo] [*National Portrait Gallery*

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

hangs in Lord St. Germans' home at Port Eliot, a picture of much importance to those who study Reynolds' career, for although the figures in it are somewhat conventionally treated, smacking of his master Hudson's influence, there is about the grouping much of the lifelikeness and *brio* which one associates with Hogarth's family groups.

Reynolds' father died on Christmas Day of 1746. There is a tablet to the worthy old schoolmaster's memory in the Church at Plympton, near the old Grammar School; placed there to his memory by Cotton, Sir Joshua's friend and biographer, and the famous donor of the Cottonian Library at Plymouth.

The death of his father obliged Reynolds to find a new home for his unmarried sisters, Frances and Jane. This he did at Devonport; and there he remained with them for the next three years. In after years he expressed regret at the little work he did during that period of his life.

There was living at Exeter an artist, Gandy by name, whose broadly painted and expressive portraits, with less of the stilted style about them which then was the bane of portrait painting, attracted young Reynolds. An ancestor of Gandy's had studied in Vandyck's studio at Blackfriars; and the talent of the great Fleming had perhaps left its trace in his descendant. But what had struck Reynolds was a remark made, or reported to him, by the younger Gandy to the effect that a picture ought to have a richness in its texture, "as if the colours had been composed of cream or cheese." It is worth observing that much of Reynolds' mature work has this creamy, if not cheesy, appearance in tone.

An interesting small portrait of Reynolds by himself belongs to this time. It is the one now in the National Portrait Gallery, in which he has represented himself looking straight before him: with one hand he shades his

eyes, in the other he holds a palette and mahl stick; the face is round, with full cheeks; he has an abundant crop of unpowdered dark brown hair; the forehead, which is partially concealed by the uplifted hand, has no marked or striking features. Besides this life-size head of Reynolds in the Portrait Gallery, there is a small one of him, also by his own hand, in which he has depicted himself with all the youthful charm of the happy age of five-and-twenty. Reynolds, however, was not neglectful in studying landscape painting, as well as painting portraits, as a panoramic view of Plymouth Harbour, painted at this time, proves. This, the earliest known landscape by our young artist, is at Port Eliot. Somewhat too brown in tone, it has the merit of being a very faithful transcript of the bay, with its picturesque surroundings of hills and islands, with a foreground of the wooden ships of Old England brightening and giving life and action to the scene.

In 1749 the future Admiral, Augustus Keppel, was a promising young naval officer, aged five-and-twenty; already distinguished in his glorious profession, in which he had risen to the rank of commander and lieutenant. At twenty he had been gazetted post-captain, and when yet but three-and-twenty was appointed to the head of a diplomatic mission from Great Britain to the Dey of Barbary; and this charge was combined with the command of the English fleet in the Mediterranean, of which Keppel was named commodore. On his voyage out to the Mediterranean Keppel's ship sprang both topmasts in the English Channel, necessitating putting into Plymouth harbour for repairs, and while he was staying with Reynolds' friends at Mount Edgcumbe, the painter was introduced to the young commodore. The two youths, both destined in after years to attain to the highest places in their different walks in life, struck up a warm friendship, and Keppel

Hanfstängl photo] [*Earl Spencer*

CHARLES, FIRST EARL OF LUCAN

invited Reynolds to go out with him to the Mediterranean on board of his flag-ship the "Centurion."

They sailed on the 4th of May 1749, and reached Lisbon on the 24th. Reynolds was now enabled to see some of the pomps and splendours of the Church of Rome; and, had he cared to do so, might have witnessed not only the procession of the Corpus Christi, but an *auto-da-fè*, which were still occasionally held for the delectation of the Lisbonians in the public squares of the Portuguese capital.

Rounding the Iberian Peninsula, the English squadron touched at Cadiz; thence it sailed to Morocco, where at Tetuan, some English subjects had been imprisoned by the Moorish governor. From Tetuan the squadron sailed to Algiers, arriving there at the end of June. On the same month Reynolds was present at an audience given by the Dey to Keppel. It was during this audience that the young Commodore showed the stuff of which he was made. The Dey lost all command of himself, while discussing with Keppel some point relating to the depredations made by his corsairs on English vessels, and in a towering passion gave orders that the beardless boy, as he called Keppel, should be there and then bowstrung. Keppel merely pointed, as his answer to this order of the Dey's, to his ships riding at anchor in the bay, and informed the irate Paynim that if he dared injure a single Englishman present he would make Algiers into their funeral pyre.

During the time which Reynolds passed in the Mediterranean he paid several visits to the island of Minorca, then under the British flag. At Port Mahon, the capital of this island, the Commandant-General Blankney showed the young painter every attention; and during the time he passed there with the General, Reynolds painted the portraits of almost all the officers of the garrison.

It was while in Minorca that Joshua met with a severe accident, which destroyed any good looks which he may have possessed. One day while on a riding expedition, he was run away with, and with his horse fell down a precipice. A deep scar on his upper lip, which he got in this fall, he carried with him to the grave. When he had recovered from the shock of this fall he left Minorca, and sailed to Leghorn, whence he made his way overland to Rome.

Reynolds remained two years in the Eternal City, through the kindness of his sisters, who advanced the necessary means, passing most of his time earnestly studying and copying the works of Raphael and Michael Angelo, and by that study acquired his great power in the manipulation of light and shade, for which his greatest works are so remarkable. But he did not confine himself to copying while in Rome; for, incongruous as it may seem, he painted some caricatures of the English who were passing those two winters in the capital of the Pope. In one of them he placed his fellow-countrymen in the position of the figures of Raphael's *School of Athens*. In this work figured some thirty people, mostly caricatured resemblances of the principal English *dilettanti* who then, even more than in these days, were attracted to Florence and Rome; eldest sons of peers, fresh from school and college, who were pleased to believe that by lounging in the galleries of Italy, and buying cartloads of more or less authentic antiquities, they were forming a taste, and cultivating their often shallow intellects. This curious work was, early in the last century, in Ireland, in the possession of Mr Henry Straffan. It would be interesting to compare it with that wonderful group of English *literati* gathered together in the Tribune at Florence, by Zoffany, at Windsor Castle.

Many years after his return to England Reynolds told Northcote that, although he succeeded with his caricatures,

Hanfstängl photo] [*Earl Spencer*

RICHARD, EARL OF LUCAN

he soon recognised the vicious course into which, if he continued to work in that line of art, he might fall, and soon forsook caricatures for good and all. In an undated letter, written from Rome to Lord Edgcumbe, he thanks him for having been instrumental in enabling him to attain to the "height of his wishes, being in the midst of the greatest works of art that the world has produced;" and he offers to copy for him any picture in Rome that he will be pleased to choose, "the larger the better, as it will have a more good effect when hung up, and a kind of painting I like more than little." That letter is the only one which has come down to us written by Reynolds during the two years he was in Rome. One of his copies of a great painting in Rome was formerly over the altar in the Chapel at Hampton Court; that of Guido's *St Michael* in the Church of the Carmelites. In one of the painter's memoranda books he writes of his impression on first seeing Michael Angelo's masterpiece of painting—the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. "I was let into the Capella Sistina," he writes, "in the morning, and remained there the whole day, a great part of which I spent in walking up and down it with great self-importance. Passing through, on my return, the rooms of Raphael, they appeared of an inferior order."

By "self-importance" one must not infer that Reynolds, always a modest man, expressed any self-conceit. I believe what he intended to express was a feeling of ecstasy at being able fully to appreciate the marvellous work of supreme genius, under which he paced during the "great part" of a day; and felt that inexpressible sense of beatitude in his spirit evoked by the sublime brush-work of the greatest artist of all times; the man for whose genius Reynolds felt something approaching the worship of a deity—his loadstar through the remainder of his life. Forty years after this day passed in the Sistine Chapel,

the last word Sir Joshua uttered in public, on the day when he bade farewell to the Royal Academy and his pupils, was the name of Michael Angelo.

In another of his memoranda, Reynolds, writing of Raphael, acknowledges that it takes time, and a full acquaintance with his great works in the chambers of the Vatican, before full justice can be done him. In an article which was afterwards published by Malone, Reynolds writes, "I remember very well my own disappointment when I first visited the Vatican; but, on confessing my feelings to a brother student," (probably his brother student was John Astley, who was with him in Rome, and had also studied with Reynolds under Hudson) "of whose ingenuousness I had a high opinion, he acknowledged that the works of Raphael had the same effect on him, or rather, that they did not produce the effect which he expected. This was a great relief to my mind; and, on enquiring farther of other students, I found those persons who only from natural imbecility appeared to be incapable of ever realising these divine performances made pretension to instantaneous raptures on first beholding them. . . . I found myself in the midst of works executed upon principles with which I was unacquainted. I felt my ignorance and stood abashed. All the undigested notions of painting which I had brought with me from England, where the art was at its lowest ebb—it could never indeed be lower—were to be totally done away with and eradicated from my mind. It was necessary, as it is expressed on a very solemn occasion, that I should become as a little child. Notwithstanding my disappointment, I proceeded to copy some of those excellent works. I viewed them again and again; I never affected to feel their merits, and to admire them more than I really did. In a short time a new taste and new perceptions began to dawn upon me, and I was convinced

Hanfstängl photo]

[*Earl Spencer*

FREDERICK, EARL OF BESSBOROUGH

Hanfstängl photo]

[*Earl Spencer*

HENRIETTA FRANCES, COUNTESS OF BESSBOROUGH

that I had originally formed a false opinion of the perfection of art, and that this great painter was well-entitled to the high rank which he holds in the estimation of the world."

Surely there is no lack of modesty in the opinion expressed by one great artist for another in the above lines, or for the delightful way in which Reynolds confesses to his inability, till much study had formed his taste, to admire the great works of the divine Sanzio.

Of young John Astley, Reynolds' fellow-student in London and in Rome, the following story is told: While walking in the Campagna, Reynolds, with some other students, took off their coats. For a long time nothing could persuade young Astley to take off his. At last he was prevailed on to do so, and the cause of his not wishing to follow suit with the rest was then revealed by an oil sketch of a waterfall being discovered painted on the back of the artist's waistcoat.

During the winter, while copying one of Raphael's works in the icy chambers of the Vatican, Reynolds caught a violent chill, which probably developed into a fever. This illness left him permanently deaf of one ear, and ever after he was obliged to use an ear trumpet.

The following description by Reynolds of the manner in which the English studied art in the galleries of the Vatican, shows that as it was in the seventeen-hundreds so it is nowadays: "Instead," he writes, "of examining the beauties of the works of fame, and why they are esteemed, they only enquire the subject of the picture and the name of the painter, the history of a statue and where it was found, and write that down. They scarcely ever looked at the paintings the whole time."

In his life of Reynolds, Leslie gives a minute description of Reynolds' note-books, which he filled with sketches and memoranda while in Rome. Two of these books are

in the British Museum. The notes are mostly written in pencil. There are also two of these memoranda books in the Soane Museum.

In the month of April 1752, Reynolds went from Rome to Naples, where he only remained a short time; for, in May he was again in Rome; and, leaving that place during the month, he went to Florence. He visited Perugia and Assisi on the way; but he makes no reference in his note-books to the frescoes by Cimabue and Giotto, nor the churches of Assisi; which would appear strange, were it not that so-called Gothic art was a thing quite ignored, even by artists, at that time.

There is not a word either by Reynolds in his memoranda books relating to the works of Orcagna and Ghirlandajo in the Florentine churches; and he probably regarded them as belonging to the dark ages. Naturally in Michael Angelo's own town, Reynolds writes copiously on the Master's works in that city: "When I am here," he writes, "I think M. Angelo superior to the whole world for greatness of taste."

During his stay in Florence Reynolds painted the portrait of an English sculptor, Wilton, who became later on a member of the Royal Academy.

Leaving Florence early in July, Reynolds next stayed at Bologna a fortnight; and from Bologna he went on to Venice, where he arrived at the end of July. There he stayed till the middle of August. The following is taken from one of his notes written while at Venice; "When I observed an extraordinary effect of light and shade in any picture, I took a leaf out of my pocket-book, and darkened every part of it with the same gradation of light and shade as the picture, leaving the white paper untouched to represent the light, and this without any attention to the subject, or to the drawing of the figures."

Hanfstängl photo]

[*Earl Spencer*

FRANCES, MARCHIONESS CAMDEN

Hanfstängl photo]

[*Earl Spencer*

LA MARÉCHALE DE MUYS

(*Chanoinesse*)

Probably it was while dwelling in Titian's city on the waters, that Reynolds first beheld the magic of that Master's colour, of which throughout his after life he tried hard to discover the secret. Of that glorious work of Titian's, the *Peter Martyr*—now, alas! no more—Reynolds writes: "The trees harmonise with the sky; that is, are lost in it in some places, at others relieved smartly by means of white clouds. The angels have wings; at the dark part of their shoulders being the same colour as the trees; the trees are of a brown tint. The shadows of the white drapery, the colour of the light ground, the colour of the face of the saint. The landscape dark. Trees opposed to expanse of light; behind, dark trees; behind that again blue scrumbled mountains. The drawing in general, noble: particularly the right leg of him that flies." I think this sample of Reynolds' notes on paintings in Venice is sufficient to give the reader a good idea of the manner in which he describes the paintings which took his fancy most when in Italy.

Reynolds appears now to have become anxious to return to England. One evening at a Venetian Theatre with some other Englishmen, when an English air was played, Reynolds and his companions were affected to tears. This was certainly a case of the "home-pain," as the Germans call the longing for the Fatherland.

In the middle of August, Reynolds set his face for home. Passing through Milan, he arrived at Turin, where he met his former master, Hudson, who was on his way to Rome, accompanied by the sculptor Roubiliac. Crossing the Alps, Reynolds passed through Lyons, and reached Paris without adventure. While in Paris, he wrote, "the French cannot boast of above one painter of a truly just and correct taste, free from any mixture of affectation or bombast." It is not easy to guess who the one painter above referred to could have been. Watteau

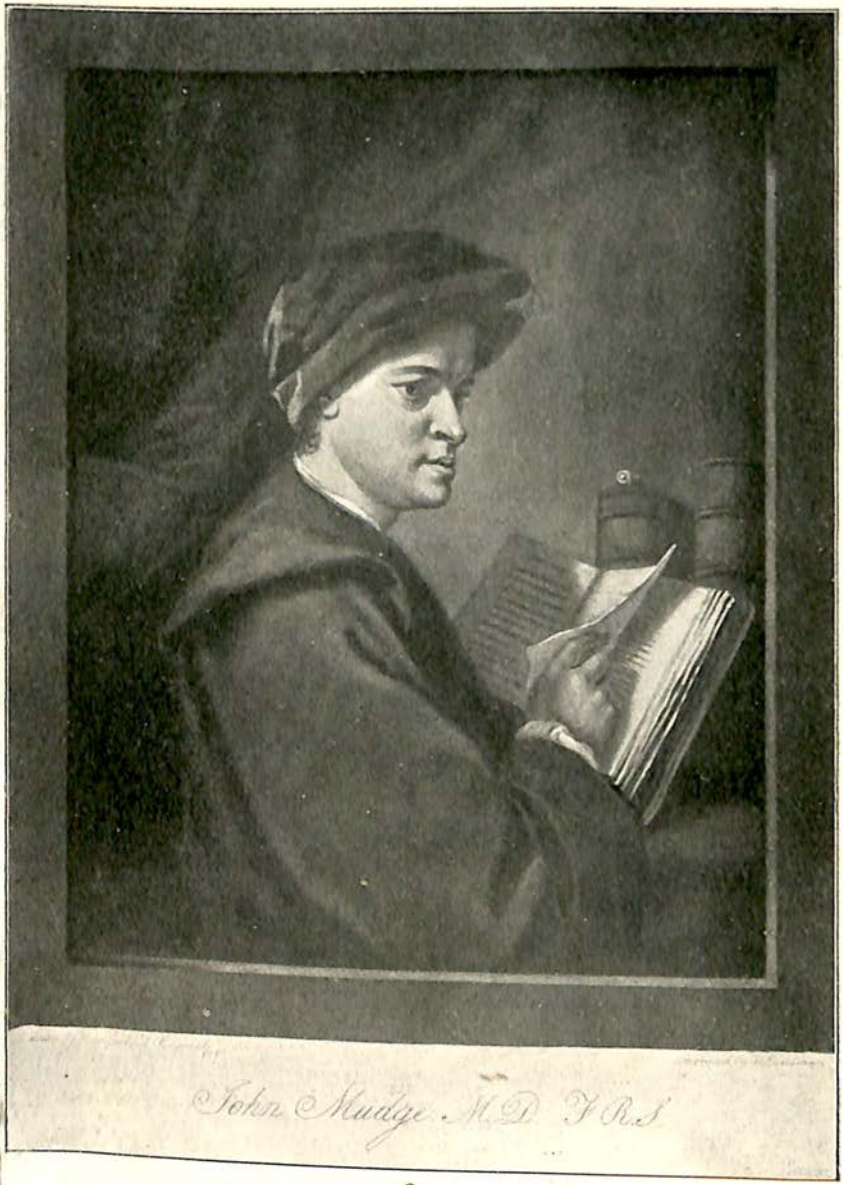
had been in his grave thirty years; his pupils and followers cannot be said to have been "free from affectation and bombast," nor can the portrait-painters of that day, such as Nattier and Vanloo. There was one French painter, however, working at that time in Paris, whose delightful paintings have only of late been partly appreciated by us, and we would like to think that the one French painter free of affectation and bombast, referred to by Reynolds, was Jean Simeon Chardin; but there is nothing to prove it.

After a month passed in Paris, Reynolds returned to England, where he arrived on the 16th of October 1752; and he appears to have gone at once to Devonshire, where he remained for three months.

While at Plymouth he painted a portrait of an old friend of his father's, Dr John Mudge, who was a well-known physician, as well as a life-long friend of the family. He also painted the doctor's father, Zachariah Mudge, Prebendary of Exeter, whose sermons were admired by such great judges as Burke and Johnson.

At this time Reynolds' price for his portraits was very low: for a head he charged only five guineas. Lord Edgcumbe strongly advised Joshua to try his fortunes in London. Accordingly he left Plymouth, and established himself in the capital. He occupied rooms first at 104, St Martin's Lane, where, besides himself, there were several artists lodging. Among these were Thornhill and his son-in-law, Hogarth. St Martin's Lane appears to have then had as many painters residing in it as nowadays are to be found in West Kensington.

Reynolds' younger sister, Frances, went with him to London, and kept house for him.



DR JOHN MUDGE

(*From the mezzotint by Dickenson*)

CHAPTER II

FIRST YEARS IN LONDON

1752-1763

ACCORDING to Fanny Burney, Joshua Reynolds' sister Frances was a somewhat uncomfortable young person to live with, for she suffered from a constant perplexity and irresolution of mind, "which to herself was restlessly tormenting, and to all around her was teasingly wearisome." The above, it should be remembered, in justice to Frances Reynolds, was one woman's opinion of another, and such, we are told, cannot always be relied on. At any rate, Dr Johnson was devoted to Miss Frances, for did not he call her his "dearest dear!"

What proved a hindrance to her happiness was attempting to set herself up as an artist. She insisted on copying, or rather in trying to copy, her brother's pictures; copies which, he said, made him cry and others laugh. However, the pretty group by her of herself and her sister, Mrs Palmer, in Sir Robert Edgcumbe's collection, shows that she could paint passably well.

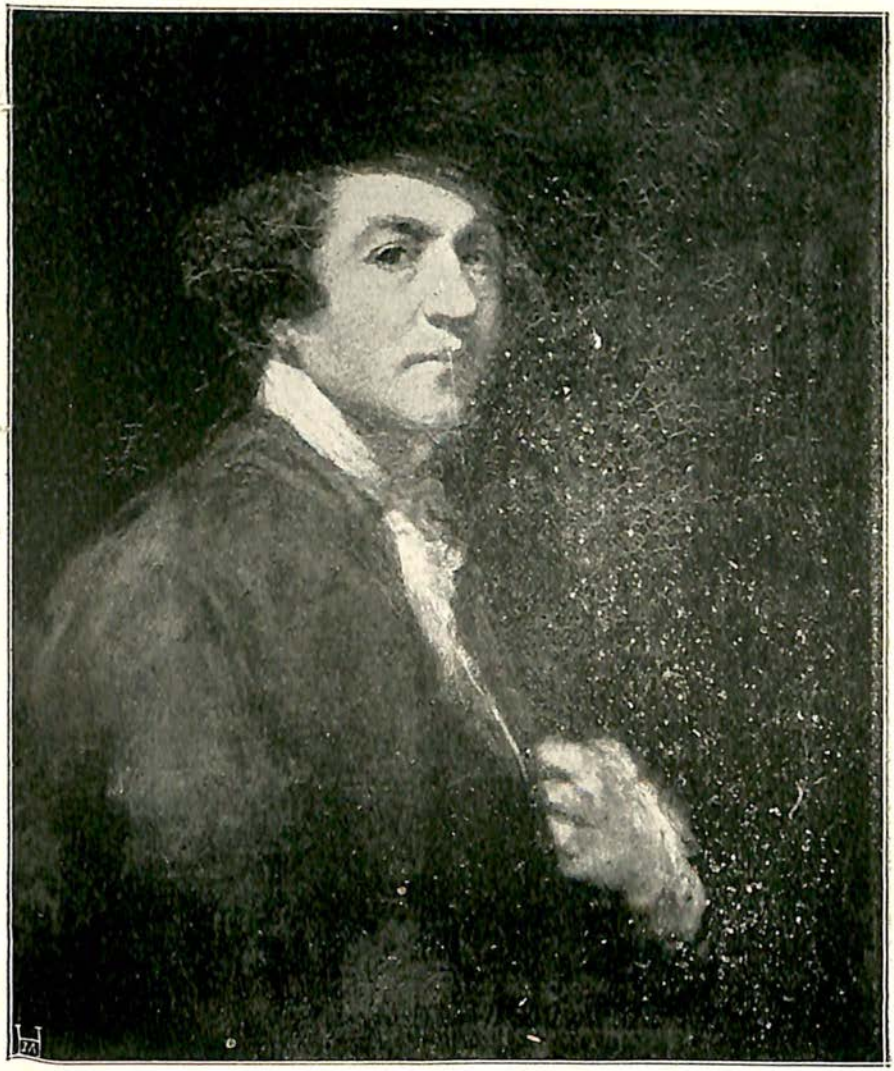
In 1753 Horace Walpole wrote that there was "no war, no politics, no parties," and that in the memory of Englishmen "there never was so inanimate an age. It is more fashionable to go to Church than to either House of Parliament. Even the era of the Gunnings is over; both sisters have lain in, and have scarce made a paragraph in the newspapers, though their names were grown so re-

nowned that in Ireland the beggar women bless you with 'the luck of the Gunnings attend you.'"

Reynolds did not remain long in St Martin's Lane, and he took a handsome house on the north side of Great Newport Street; he also raised his prices, charging twelve guineas for painting the half, and forty-eight for a whole length; which was the same price as his old master, Hudson, had charged his sitters. Through his friendship with Lord Edgcumbe, Reynolds soon had his hands full. His full length of young Commodore Keppel made him at once the most celebrated portrait-painter in England. That splendid portrait is now one of the art treasures of Lord Rosebery's Scottish home. Both the Gunnings sat to him—the eldest, Elizabeth, Duchess of Hamilton, and her sister, Maria Lady Coventry—in 1759.

Reynolds' work now so increased that he was obliged to call in the assistance of others. Peter Toms helped to paint the draperies of his ladies' portraits. Marchi, an Italian youth who had travelled back from Rome with Reynolds, was another of his assistants. His portrait by Joshua hangs in the Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy. And, besides these assistants, Reynolds had now pupils studying under him in Great Newport Street—two youthful artists named Beach and Barren.

In Northcote's life of Sir Joshua he records that even at this early stage of his successful career, Reynolds would never commence to paint a portrait without having a full determination of making it the best he had as yet created. "Neither," writes Northcote, "would he allow it to be an excuse for his failure to say, 'the subject was a bad one for a picture.' There was always nature, he would observe, which, if well-treated, was fully sufficient for the purpose."



Hanfstängl photo] [*National Gallery*

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS WHEN A YOUNG MAN

(*Painted by himself*)

The Dukes of Devonshire and Grafton gave him sittings, while Reynolds painted in Great Newport Street, and there he painted his famous full-length portrait of Keppel, which was certainly the finest work accomplished as yet by the lord of all English artists—a portrait which, without exaggeration, may be said to have made an epoch in that form of art in this country. The gallant young sailor is represented as literally walking out of the canvas. His countenance is full of animation, and as he seems to step briskly, bareheaded, across the beach, his locks are blown back from his forehead by the gale; with his left hand he clasps his sword by his side, his right is pointing to an object before him. In the background a wild sea breaks on the shore. A portrait so full of movement, so animated and so characteristic, had not been seen in England; and it is not surprising that it made not only the success of the hour, but that it placed its author at the top of his profession. This noble work was finished in the year 1753; and Reynolds repeated the action of Keppel's figure in another of his full lengths —once certainly, if not more frequently.

In the portrait of the young Frederick, fifth Earl of Carlisle, the action is similar, although the treatment and accessories are very different from those in the Keppel portrait. The young Peer is represented in his robes of the Thistle, descending a palatial staircase, a spaniel frisking by the white satin shoes of the young K.T. This portrait of Lord Carlisle is one of the many family portraits at Castle Howard, if it has not met the fate of some of the art treasures in that place, and become the property of a plutocrat or soap refiner.

In connection with the attitude introduced so happily by Reynolds into these portraits of Keppel and Carlisle, it may not be considered, perhaps, out of place if I here record what struck me one day when in the Premier's

house in Downing Street. I watched Gladstone crossing the hall, with his right hand extended, in animated conversation; and, although costume and surroundings were so entirely dissimilar, the resemblance to those full-length portraits by Reynolds and the Great Commoner's momentary attitude seized my imagination at the moment, and left an ineffaceable impression.

Besides painting the Commodore, Reynolds made the likenesses of many of Keppel's relations, which formerly adorned their house at Quidenham Park, in Norfolk.

His portrait of Keppel was engraved in mezzotint by Edward Fisher, in 1759.

About this time Liotard, a native of Geneva, commonly known as "The Turk," from his fondness for wearing an Eastern costume after a stay he made in Constantinople, came to London, and for a season was the fashion among the belles and beaux of St James's. His success appears to have aroused Reynolds' ill-humour. "The only merit," he said, "in Liotard's pictures is neatness . . . his pictures are just what ladies do when they paint for amusement."

Some years later, Reynolds had better reason to be alarmed at the fashion which made the society of the day flock to Ramsay's, Gainsborough's, and to Romney's studios.

The poet, Mason, who amused himself by painting in an amateur fashion, wrote an interesting notice on Reynolds' method of work at this period. Reynolds, when not occupied in painting a portrait, Mason says, was either retouching an old Master, or painting some poor child or beggar. He began his painting by covering over a light tinted canvas with a groundwork of white, and upon this, while the white groundwork was still wet, he would rapidly sketch in with a brush (he never used a pencil or chalk) the head of his sitter. He spread nothing on his palette at commencing a portrait but flake-white,

lake, and black. He then would mix together these colours: and in an hour's time a head would stand out on the canvas, which, although but a sketch more or less in monochrome, would be full of character, and even striking as a likeness. So much for the first sitting; in the second Reynolds would use a little of a colour Mason calls "Spanish yellow;" and in subsequent sittings he would employ those terribly fugitive colours, lake and carmine for the flesh-tints. He always worked with a hair pencil, and never used, as was the universal manner of other artists, a port-crayon. He began, continued, and finished his paintings with a brush. The ease and facility with which he worked was truly marvellous, according to Mason; and we can fully believe that he was right. What was to be deplored was our painter's love of the so-called "vehicles," which he used so freely. These were composed of various kinds of oils and varnishes. One of these is called megilp—a horrible preparation, still used by some painters—which imparts a temporary brilliancy to the painting, but in a few years ruins paint and canvas. Besides this baneful preparation, Reynolds employed many different vehicles in which oil, varnish, and even wax, formed the principal ingredients. It was owing to these materials, preparations which had the same effect on the paintings of Reynolds as the use of alcohol has on the human frame—namely, stimulating at first, but destructive in its later effects—that the pictures have come down to us in the majority of instances mere wrecks of their former selves. The carmines and lakes have fled from the lips and cheeks of his fair sitters, who sometimes appear mere ghosts of likenesses; and in many of his works the whole picture has darkened to a dreary obscurity, or become a mass of fissures, or even worn actually down into the base of the painting.

Reynolds was for ever striving to discover the secret of the gorgeous colouring of Titian and his pupils: that marvellous glow of colour which suffuses their paintings, in which nature may almost be said to be excelled; landscapes and portraits which even after three centuries retain a glow and glory of colour, and seem to throw out from off their canvases

"a light that never was on sea or land."

So determined was Reynolds to unravel the mystery of this secret of Venetian colouring, that he destroyed many a fine old Italian painting—not, we may trust, genuine Titians—in the vain attempt to solve the insoluble. The artist only wasted his time, and destroyed some fine old paintings.

The painter, Haydon, referring to Reynolds' use, or rather misuse, of wax and megilp, said he wondered that Reynolds' paintings did not crack while still on the easel; and Sir George Beaumont said that it was believed that many of Reynolds' portraits died before the man who had painted them, but, added Sir George, "never mind, a faded portrait by Reynolds is better than a fresh one by anybody else;" and Beaumont was quite right.

In 1884, when at the Exhibition of Sir Joshua's works in the Grosvenor Gallery, Ruskin wrote, with his wonted impetuosity, "It was seen, broadly speaking, that neither the painter knew how to paint, the patron to preserve, nor the cleaner to restore."*

The following passage from his writings gives us Reynolds' opinions on his own work:—"My success, and continued improvement in my art, if I may be allowed the expression, may be ascribed in a good measure to a principle, which I boldly recommend to imitators. I mean a principle of honesty, which, in this, as in all other in-

* "Art of England," p. 248.

Hanfstängl photo] [*National Gallery*

GEORGE IV. WHEN PRINCE OF WALES

stances, is, according to the vulgar proverb, certainly the best policy. I always endeavoured to do my best. Great or vulgar, good subjects or bad, all had nature, by the exact representation of which, or even by the endeavour to give such a representation, the painter cannot but improve in his art. My principal labour was employed on the whole together; and I was never weary of changing, and trying different modes and different effects. I had always some scheme in my mind, and a perpetual desire to advance. By constantly endeavouring to do my best, I acquired a power of doing that with spontaneous facility, which was, at first, the whole effort of my mind; and my reward was threefold; the satisfaction resulting from acting on this just principle, improvement in my art, and the pleasure derived from a constant pursuit after excellence. I was always ready to believe that my uncertainty of proceeding in my works—that is, my never being sure of my hand, and my frequent alterations—were from a refined taste, which could not acquiesce in anything short of a high degree of excellence.

"I had not an opportunity of being early initiated in the principles of colouring; no man, indeed, could teach me. If I had never been settled with respect to colouring, let it at the same time be remembered that my unsteadiness in this respect proceeded from an inordinate desire to possess every kind of excellence that I saw in the works of others; without considering that there is in colouring, as in style, excellences which are incompatible with each other. However, this pursuit, or, indeed, any similar pursuit, prevents the artist from being tired of his art. We all know how often those masters who sought after colouring changed their manners; which others, merely from not seeing various modes, acquiesced all their lives in that with which they set out. On the contrary, I tried every effort of colour; and, leaving out every colour

in its turn, showed every colour that I could do without it. As I alternately left out every colour, I tried every new colour; and often, it is well known, failed. . . . My fickleness in the mode of colouring arose from an eager desire to attain the highest excellence. This is the only merit I assume to myself from my conduct in that respect."

When someone deplored to Reynolds the unfitness of the costume of the day for being painted, a fashion in both men and women's dresses which seems to us—labouring under the most hideous fashion of attire that has ever been adopted by "God's image"—so becoming, and so adapted to show off the good looks of either sex, he replied, "never mind; they have all light and shadow." In his light and shadow effects in his portraits, Reynolds had no rival, and was at his best on a level with even the greatest masters of the Spanish and Dutch Schools. His weakest quality was that of ignorance of anatomy; but perhaps the skill with which he concealed his lack of knowledge of the human figure in his portraits was second only to his great power of depicting expression.

While in Great Newport Street Reynolds made the most memorable of his many friendships. During a visit to Devonshire in the month of December 1754, Reynolds had read Dr Johnson's life of the poet Savage with absorbing interest, and he longed to meet the sage. Boswell recounts the famous meeting: "When Dr Johnson lived in Castle Street, Cavendish Square, he went frequently to visit the ladies who lived opposite to him, Miss Cotterells, daughters of Admiral Cotterell. Reynolds used also to visit them, and thus they met." This acquaintance between these two great men soon ripened into a warm and lasting friendship, which never ceased till Johnson's death, thirty years after their first meeting in the house of the Cotterells. Ten years after they had

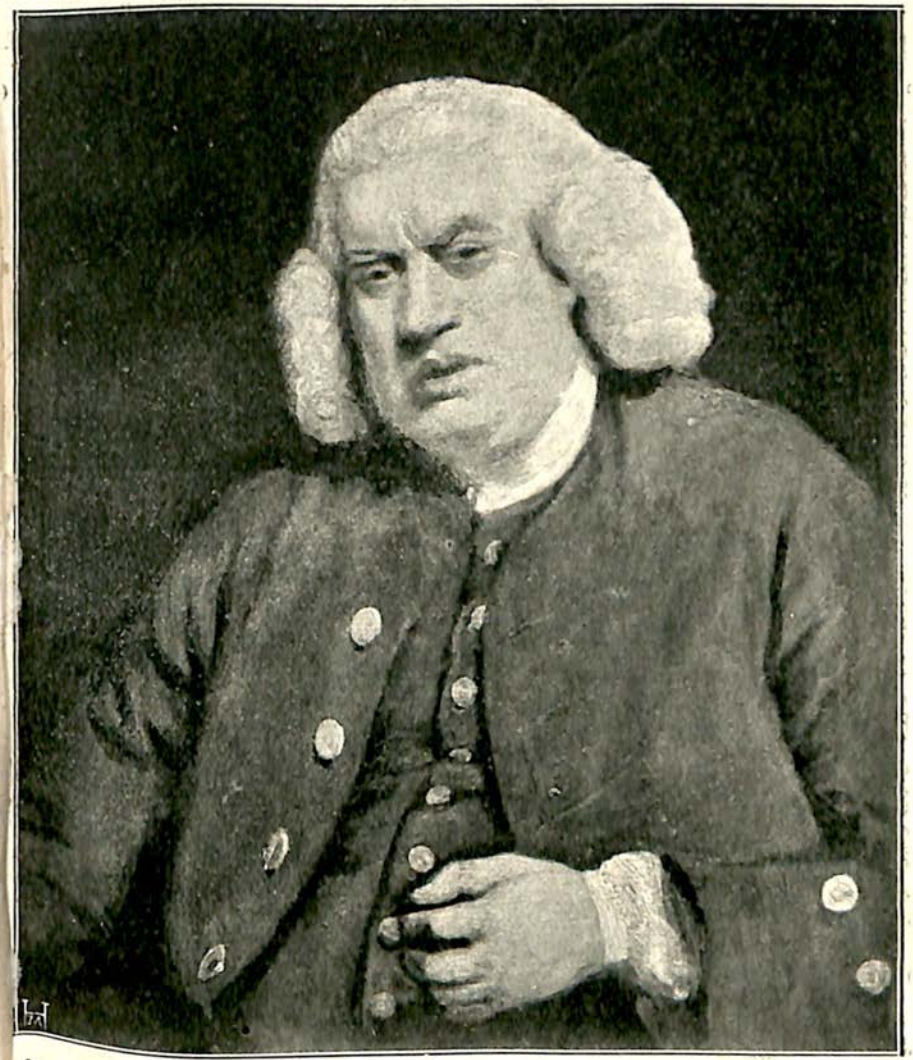
become friends, Johnson, writing to Reynolds after a severe illness from which the latter had recently recovered, says, "if I should lose you, I should lose almost the only man I can call a friend." Sir Joshua Reynolds' memory will always be associated with those honoured ones of Johnson, of Goldsmith and of Burke; but of these three the greatest is that of Samuel Johnson. Mutually Reynolds and Johnson helped one another. Without the great painter's art we should not have any very convincing portrait of Johnson, for the finest likenesses of "the great Cham" of Literature are by his brush; and Johnson helped Reynolds to form his literary style. Reynolds, indeed, bore his testimony to the great service Johnson gave him in the preparation of his famous "Discourses" to the Royal Academy, in the following lines: "Whatever merit they have," he wrote, "must be imputed, in a great measure, to the education which I may be said to have had under Dr Johnson. . . . He qualified my mind to think justly. No man had, like him, the faculty of teaching inferior minds the art of thinking."

Reynolds' pocket, or note-books, in which he jotted down from year to year the names of his sitters, commenced in the year 1755, and come down to 1790, two years before his death. Of these pocket-books nineteen are still in existence. After Reynolds' death these books belonged to his relations, the Gwatkins of Plymouth. In 1873 these precious records were sold at Christie's for a ridiculously small sum to a Mr Pocock, but the greater portion are now preserved in the Library of the Royal Academy. In Mr Algernon Graves' and Mr Cronin's splendid volumes on Sir Joshua Reynolds, the whole of the entries in these books have been minutely examined and classified, and they form, with the entries from his ledgers, the basis of their monumental work to the memory of our great painter.

Besides the Swiss portrait-painter, Liotard, two other artists were much the fashion in London at this period of our story. The most favoured one by the Court was Allan Ramsay, the gifted son of the author of "The Gentle Shepherd," the other was Francis Cotes. The former was the especial favourite of the young Prince of Wales, afterwards George III.; the latter painter, who was two years junior to Reynolds, was in great demand with the beauties of the day. Although neither Ramsay nor Cotes could compare with Reynolds as portrait-painters, both at this time succeeded better with what would now be called "the smart set," than did Reynolds.

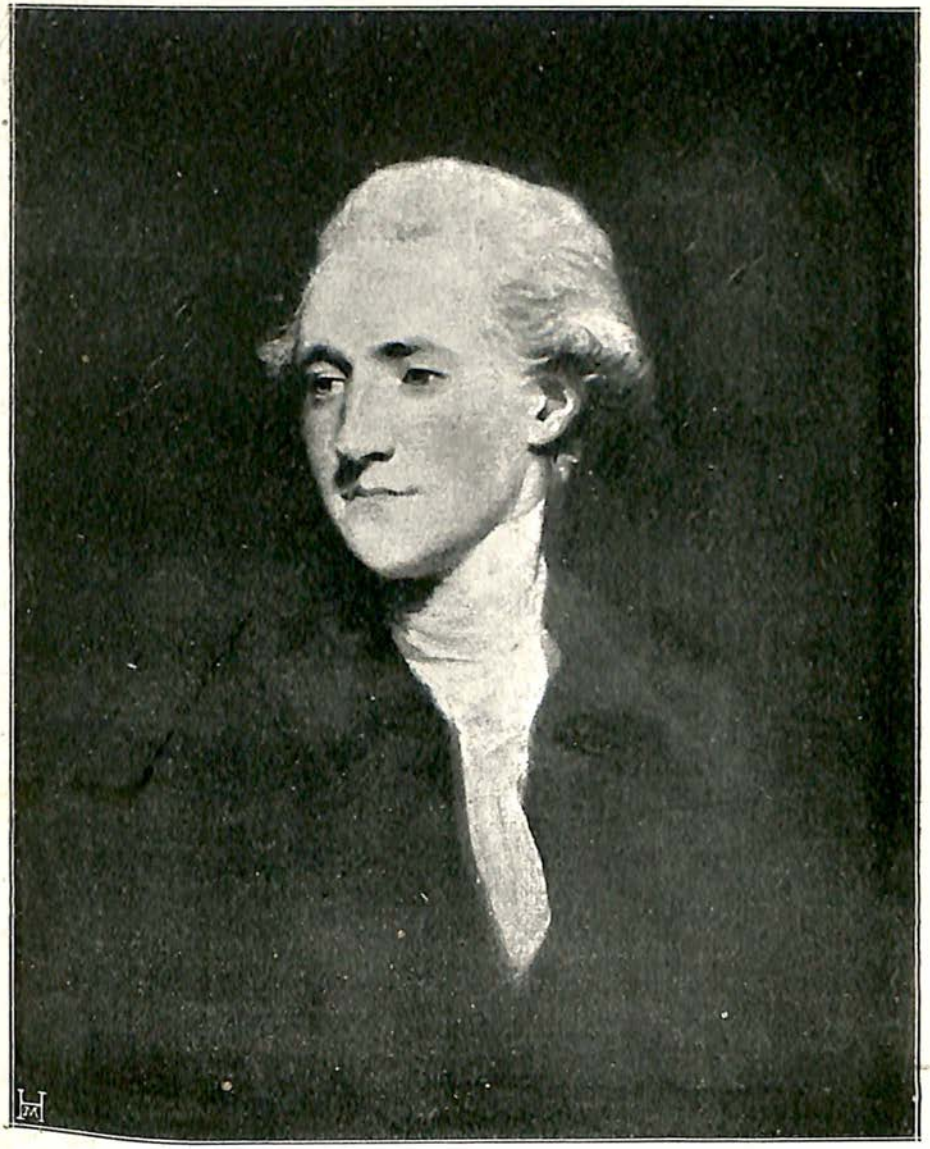
In 1755, an effort was made—a former one had been unsuccessful—to start an Academy of Art in London. There already existed a nucleus of an Academy in a drawing school of design in St Peter's Court, St Martin's Lane. This drawing academy professed to follow the chief lines of the French Academy of Painting and Sculpture, which dated back to the year 1648. There was then, and it still exists, a society of art patrons calling themselves The Dilettanti Society. It consisted of a select number of wealthy young men, who had, while making what was called "the grand tour" on the continent of Europe, acquired a smattering in art matters. This Society, or rather club, was approached by Reynolds and other artists in the hope of their aiding the scheme of starting an Academy of Arts; but at first nothing came of it, as there was too great a lack of interest in art among the English society of the day to make the attempt successful.

Among some of Reynolds' most interesting sitters during the years 1754 and 1755 was that old veteran warrior, Field-Marshal Sir John, afterwards Lord, Ligonier. Sir Joshua painted the fine old soldier seated on a splendid bay charger; with his baton in hand; he



Hanfstängl photo] [*National Gallery*

DR JOHNSON



Hanfstängl photo] *[Earl Spencer*

RICHARD BURKE

appears to be deciding the ordering of a battle, which is in full swing in the background. Visitors to the National Gallery will be familiar with this work, which is well seen on the landing-place of that Gallery. There is a replica of it at Trentham Hall, in Staffordshire. Reynolds is said to have thought it one of his best works; but to us there is something theatrical and unreal in the attitude of the Field-Marshal; although similar equestrian portraits had been already done beyond rivalry by the great masters of the Italian and Spanish Schools.

Another great man, but in a different line, sat also to our painter, this was Lord Anson, the circumnavigator, who had taken with him on his famous voyage young Commodore Keppel, Reynolds' staunch friend, when Keppel was in his eighteenth year. In spite of every impediment having been put in the way of Anson and his gallant crew, the voyage round the world, full of perilous adventures, had been a triumphant success, and covered the leader and his companions with well-earned distinction.

The notorious Alderman, afterwards Lord Mayor Beckford, was another of Reynolds' sitters in Great Newport Street. It was in 1756 that Dr Johnson gave Reynolds the first of his numerous sittings. This portrait was in half length and full face. The Doctor seems in the throes of composition; in one hand he holds the pen; his head lolls in a meditative attitude. Reynolds gave this portrait to Boswell, who had it engraved for the first edition of his famous biography of his illustrious friend.

In no line of his difficult art was Reynolds so happy and so successful as in his portraits of childhood. In that delightful line of humanity in which innocence and candour are sometimes seen in the most delightful aspect, his art was unrivalled; and he was also fortunate in having about him the most beautiful of any earthly child-world.

Where but in England can we find such perfect types of children, either those who grow up in our old English homes: beauteous little beings who inherit the loveliness of a long line of splendid ancestry, or the children of the humble and the poor. Although most of the children immortalised by our painter belonged to the aristocracy of his country, he has on some of his canvases given us in his fancy portraits of poor children, creations that will never die; although taken often from some poor child waif, whom he had met in the purlieus of St Martin's Lane, or Covent Garden. Whether the children of princes or peasants, dukes or dustmen, Reynolds' pictures of children are unrivalled. Who, in recalling such presentments of childhood as his portrait of poor little *Penelope Boothby*, seated so demurely in her mob cap, with her little mittened hands folded on her lap, and all the look of precocious death on her sweet little face; or of *Master Crewe*, masquerading as a miniature King Harry the Eighth; or of that delicious little romp of a girl, *Miss Bowles*, clasping her spaniel to her breast; or little *Bulteel*, in his red coat and yellow breeches; or the little lady with her pottle of strawberries (now happily the property of the nation), in Hertford House; or his *Puck*, and his group in the National Gallery of *Angels' Heads*. But it would take a chapter if only one were to name that immortal company of England's fairest flowers, with which Reynolds by his genius, and his engravers' burin, has given us a priceless legacy.

As a painter of children Reynolds holds a higher place than Rubens or Vandyck, and not far below the divine Raphael.

The earliest of Reynolds' child portraits was that of *Master Jacob Bouverie*, which is, we believe, still in the possession of his descendant at Longford Castle. It bears the date 1757.

Hollyer photo] [*Earl of Crewe*

MASTER CREWE AS HENRY VIII.

In that year Horace Walpole sat to Reynolds, for a half-length portrait; and for him, Reynolds, in the years to come, was frequently employed for his collection at Strawberry Hill; the most famous success was the group of Walpoles, three beautiful great-nieces, *The Ladies Waldegrave*, now belonging to Mrs Thwaites.

In the following year Reynolds had commissions to paint some members of the Royal Family. The Duke of Cumberland—a royal lout of the first water—sat to him; as did also his brother, the Prince of Wales, then within two years of becoming King. None of Reynolds' portraits of the reigning family, with the exception of those delightful child-portraits of the little *Prince William of Gloucester*, which is the gem among the portraits in the Hall of Trinity College, Cambridge, and that of the little *Princess Sophia Matilda of Gloucester*, rolling on the grass with a dog in her arms, in the Corridor at Windsor Castle—are among his best work. For some unknown reason, George III., when he succeeded to the crown, never gave his patronage willingly to Reynolds. Allan Ramsay was the King's favourite portrait-painter at the commencement of his long reign; Gainsborough succeeded the Scottish painter, and Benjamin West was the King's especial favourite towards the close of his life. Reynolds' fame was, however, now too well established to gain much from the favour of royalty. The King was the loser, and not Reynolds.

At the end of 1759 Reynolds accomplished one of his rarely-successful imaginary paintings, a picture merely referred to in his note as *Venus*. This is a clever piece of flesh painting; it represents a lady lying recumbent in a wooded landscape, attired in a bracelet. A very youthful Cupid watches his divine parent through the boughs of a tree.

Early in the year 1760 Reynolds left Great Newport Street for what was then called Leicester Fields, now

Leicester Square. None of London's old squares has been more changed during the last score or so of years than Leicester Square. It owed its name to the big house which in Reynolds' day nearly filled all its eastern side, built by Robert Sidney, Earl of Leicester, who died there in 1677. In Leicester Square, Elizabeth Stuart, Queen of Bohemia, the "Queen of Hearts," as she was affectionately named, had lived, and there she died in 1661. The great French statesman, Colbert, had lodged there, as well as Prince Eugene. There, dwelling in a large house, which stood on the north side of the Square, Frederick, Prince of Wales, had "pouted," after quarrelling with his father, George II., and there "Fred, who was alive and is dead," had departed, without any regret to his family or any one else, this life; and there his son, George III., lodged when in town, up to the time of his accession. There, too, his brother, the Duke of Gloucester, lived, who married the widow of Lord Waldegrave. At the end of the eighteenth century the glory of Leicester House had departed; the former abode of princes had been turned into a museum of guns and armoury, and the gardens at the back of the mansion were built over. Next to Leicester House stood Saville House, belonging to Sir John Saville, which was gutted during the Lord George Gordon "No Popery" riots.

The square itself was laid out and built between 1630 and 1679. In 1738 it was enclosed, and in 1747 a hideous equestrian statue in lead of George I., which had formerly stood at Canons, was placed in the middle of the square; and any one who has attained to middle age can recall that ridiculous figure of the first of our Hanoverian rulers.

In the first half of the eighteenth century Sir James Thornhill, then famous for his atrocious ceiling and dome

paintings, had a house in the Fields, and shortly before Reynolds migrated from Great Newport Street to Leicester Fields, Hogarth, the greatest genius in painting that we can boast, had in, 1753, established himself opposite Leicester House, on the southern side of the Fields, and there the "great painter of mankind," as Garrick called him in those noble lines engraved on his tomb in Chiswick Churchyard, died four years after Reynolds' advent in Leicester Fields.

Although Hogarth and Reynolds must have met occasionally, there appears to have been no intimacy between them. "Never," writes Leslie in his life of Reynolds, "were two great painters of the same age and country so unlike each other; and their unlikeness as artists was the result of their unlikeness as men; their only resemblance consisting in their honesty and earnestness of purpose. It was not expected that they should do each other justice, and they did not. . . .

"'Study the great works of the great masters for ever,' said Reynolds. 'There is only one school,' cried Hogarth, 'and that is kept by Nature.' What was uttered on one side of the Square was pretty sure to be contradicted on the other, and neither would make the advance that might have reconciled the views of both." In Reynolds' pocket-book for 1760 he writes that his house in Leicester Fields was bought by him on the third of July. On the eleventh of September in that year he writes, "paid the remainder of the purchase money, £1000." Reynolds had given £1650 for a lease of forty-seven years, and he laid out £1500 in building a gallery and a studio. The latter was octagonal in shape, some twenty feet long by sixteen broad, and fifteen feet high. The only window in the studio was a small, square-shaped one; the sill of the window was nine feet above the floor level. Reynolds' sitters sat in an arm-chair (now in the Diploma Gallery

of the Royal Academy), which moved on castors; it was placed on a kind of dais a foot and a half above the floor. What hosts of celebrities have occupied that old arm-chair! For thirty years some of the most famous English men and women of the latter half of the eighteenth century posed in it; and, among a crowd of celebrities, and others of less fame in their generation, Mrs Siddons and Garrick, Johnson and Goldsmith, Kitty Fisher and Mrs Robinson (Perdita), Georgiana of Devonshire and Sheridan, have passed hours in its arms.

When working Reynolds held his painting palette by a long handle (this and another of his palettes are now in a place of honour in Burlington House; there is a third one, and also his mahogany travelling paint-box, which he took to Blenheim and other places, 21 inches long by 15 inches wide, and 9 inches high, at Sandye Place, Sir Robert Edgcumbe's). He painted with brushes 18 inches in length; he worked always standing, and he placed his canvas on his easel close by his sitter, almost side by side. This was remarked as a peculiarity in his mode of painting by old Lady Burlington, who was painted by Reynolds when she was the beautiful young Lady Betty Compton; she lived long enough to sit to Sir Francis Grant, who was Reynolds' successor in the President's chair nearly a century after Sir Joshua became the first President. Her portrait by Reynolds at Latimer is one of his finest full-lengths, and as brilliant in colour as when it left Reynolds' studio. One regrets to learn that Lady Burlington's impression of Reynolds was that "he was a pompous little man."

Reynolds worked with great rapidity; and could paint some half dozen sitters a day, while in the full flush of his power. He began his work early; breakfasted at nine, and by ten o'clock was standing in front of his easel. His sitters generally began to arrive at eleven

o'clock. He worked steadily away till four o'clock; he then gave the remainder of the afternoon and the evening to the society of his friends. He entertained largely, and liked to gather around his table some of the most eminent men of his time.

His house, after he died, was left by him to his niece, the Marchioness of Thomond. When she died, it was let to the Western Literary and Scientific Institute, and was greatly altered. It has been for a long time the property of the great auctioneering firm of Puttick and Simpson.

During the early seventies of last century, my artist friend, Mr. John O'Connor, and I hired the room on the first floor, looking out on the Square, which was, I believe, Reynolds' drawing-room, or parlour, as it would then have been called. We used this as a studio; but it is more associated now, in my recollection, with pleasant evenings, to which many of our friends came, among them such literary personages as George Augustus Sala, and with the oyster suppers O'Connor and I gave our guests in that room. The only thing that is unchanged there since Sir Joshua received his guests—and such guests—within its walls, is the handsome old marble chimney-piece, with a medallion of cupids let into it. Could that marble speak, what a tale it could unfold! The only portion of the interior of this house which is still in the same state as when Reynolds occupied it, is the entrance hall and the stairs—the railing of the latter turns outwards from the stairs, and is traditionally said to have been made in that form to enable the ladies to ascend in their hoops without getting them out of shape. The studio has disappeared.

The dinner hour in the latter part of the eighteenth century in London was between three and four o'clock in the afternoon. This meal was prolonged for an uncon-

scionable time, as the men sat for hours over their port and claret. At about nine tea was served in the drawing-room, to which the gentlemen, if sufficiently sober, would adjourn. Later on there was supper: I shall refer further on to these repasts.

The only time that Reynolds appears to have been somewhat ostentatious was shortly after he had taken possession of his house in Leicester Fields: he set up a coach, or what was then termed "a chariot." This chariot must have been a very gorgeous affair, for it was all painted outside with allegorical designs; and was resplendent with carvings and gildings. He seems to have been very chary in making use of this vehicle, and he used to make Fanny Reynolds drive out in it, which she, and it is not to be wondered at, being of a modest disposition, did not relish doing. When poor Fanny complained to her brother, and expressed her dislike to appearing in such a magnificent coach, he exclaimed, "What! would you have one like an apothecary's carriage?" The only person who appears to have benefited by the vehicle was Reynolds' coachman, who was wont to show it to the curious, for a fee, of course. Northcote somewhat unkindly writes that he believed this famous carriage was a second-hand "old chariot of a Sheriff of London newly done up."

The name of the celebrated "demi-mondaine," Kitty Fisher, appears frequently among Reynolds' sitters at this period of his career. He painted her portrait thrice in 1759, in various attitudes, and in different characters. She sat to him as Cleopatra dissolving the famous pearl in a goblet; and at another time with doves cooing around her; and, again, with a bird seated on her arm. No doubt the fascinating actress often allowed her fair form to be used as a model by Reynolds in some of his fanciful works, and reclined as a Venus in one painting at least. Her rival

Hollyer photo] [*Earl of Crewe*

KITTY FISHER

on the stage, and in the hearts of many men—Nelly O'Brien—was often an occupant of Reynolds' famous arm-chair in those years. We have all fallen in love with his exquisite painting of her, now in Hertford House, where she sits in the dappled shade of a garden, a wide-brimmed straw hat, called a Woffington, shelters her merry eyes; she holds a sweet little terrier in her lap, and wears a quilted rose-coloured dress. It is one of those portraits that once seen is never forgotten, so perfect is its light and shade, and so instinct is it with the glamour of beauty, life and charm of that wondrous creature, a lovely woman. Poor Nelly died six years after this likeness was painted; but as long as the colour and canvas endure she will continue to live in that picture by Reynolds.

1760 was one of our painter's busiest years; his note-book proves that he painted one hundred and twenty portraits in those twelve months; none can have been more triumphant than that one of Nelly O'Brien. Another wonderful work of his genius painted that year was the half-length of Laurence Sterne.

While Reynolds was painting Sterne, the latter's immortal "Tristram Shandy" was being published. In 1840, Sterne's portrait was bought by the Marquis of Lansdowne, who paid only five hundred guineas for it; it would be cheap now, could it be bought for as many thousands. There are few finer portraits existing than this one; it may, indeed, take a place by the side of Velazquez's *Innocent X.* in painting, and with Houdon's marvellous statue of Voltaire at the Théâtre Français. Had Reynolds created only this portrait of Sterne, we should owe him an everlasting debt of gratitude. The expression that is conveyed on that saturnine face is perhaps one of the most successful creations of any painter's brush: the man himself, with his humour, his pathos with which that

humour so strangely blended, lives again on that wonderful canvas.

Writing to a friend on the subject of this portrait, Sterne calls it "very excellent," and says that Reynolds made him a present of it "as a tribute (to use his own eloquent and flattering expression) that his heart wished to pay to my genius. That man's way of thinking and manners are at least equal to his pencil."

In 1761 took place both the marriage and coronation of George III. The first ceremony was on the 2nd of September, the second on the 22nd. That must have been a very busy season for milliners, heralds, and portrait-painters.

In that year Reynolds was in special request, as half the aristocracy were eager to be painted by him in their robes and coronets. In Reynolds' full-length portrait of Lady Elizabeth Keppel, in the gorgeous dress she wore as one of the new Queen's bridesmaids, decorating a torso of Hymen with wreaths of flowers, we have a reflection of that stately pageant. That portrait is at Woburn, for the fair Elizabeth married the heir of the Bedfords, Lord Tavistock, who met with his death a few years afterwards by a fall when out hunting, his widow soon after following him to an untimely grave, dying of that most rare disease, a broken heart.

In that year, too, Reynolds painted the life-size group, at Holland House, of the beautiful Lady Sarah Lennox, Lady Susan Strangways, and young Charles Fox, cousin to these ladies.

Six years after Reynolds painted this portrait of Lady Sarah, she married Sir Charles Bunbury, but was divorced from him, and, after an interval, married General Napier, and by him became the mother of those heroic brothers, Sir William, and Sir Charles, and George Napier.

This portrait of Lady Sarah is a disappointing one, for there is no especial beauty about her, as she leans out of a window of Holland House, and one looks in vain for the loveliness that made the young king so nearly make her his queen. However, in another portrait Reynolds painted of her when Lady Sarah Bunbury, also a full-length, he does justice to her beauty, as she half kneels, robed like a vestal before an altar, on which she offers a libation; in that portrait she is looking upwards in rapt contemplation; both face and expression are beautiful.

Holland House is rich in Reynolds' works, and additional interest belongs to the portraits of the family of Charles Fox in the collection of pictures in his noble old Kensington house, which has seen in its old-time rooms and galleries all that was most notable during the two last centuries, for in nearly every case these portraits still remain in the rooms in which they were placed while Reynolds still painted in Leicester Fields.

One of the noblest rooms of the old home of the Rich's and Fox's, on the first floor looking north over the cedars below, is still called the Sir Joshua Room, and on its walls hang many of that Master's works, the principal one being the group of Lady Sarah, Lady Susan, with young Charles Fox, already referred to. But besides this were other notable portraits by Reynolds. Here is the half-length of the founder of the Fox family, the first Lord Holland, a portly and sedate old gentleman, with the peculiarly burly black eyebrows which his son Charles James inherited; it is believed that this is the portrait with which, on its arriving at Holland House, the sitter expressed his disappointment at its apparently unfinished state; he even went so far as to make some demur to pay the price agreed on between him and the painter, and he asked Reynolds how long it had

taken him to paint it. Reynolds, naturally somewhat nettled, replied, "All my life, my lord."

Here, too, are the portraits of Mary, Lady Holland, and Mrs Russell when a child, of Lord George Lennox, of Tom Connolly, and of Mary, Duchess of Richmond, all by Reynolds.

Here, too, is the best known likeness of Charles James Fox, in his blue coat and buff waistcoat, the Liberal colours, painted nearly thirty years later than the one in which he talks with his handsome cousins, and probably almost the last male portrait Reynolds painted.

At Holland House is the receipt for the portrait in Reynolds' handwriting, as follows:—"Received, April 20th, 1789, from the Rt. Honble. Charles Fox the sum of an hundred guineas for his portrait. £105. J. Reynolds."

In this same Sir Joshua Room is Reynolds' picture of a little girl carrying a mouse in a cage, at which a cat is smelling, the print of which, known as *Muscipula*, was one of the most popular of mezzotints of the children's pictures; and last, but not least, Reynolds' portrait of Baretti, the Italian, a friend of his and Johnson's, hangs also in this room, together with a portrait of the artist himself.

Reynolds was a frequent visitor at Holland House; probably the large group of Lady Sarah and her cousins was painted there; certainly the small oil sketch for it, which is placed near the larger painting, was done on the spot. There are some differences between the finished painting and the sketch; both, however, appear to have been painted out of doors, the want of shadow gives that impression, and they have that "garden light" under which Queen Bess loved to be painted, as she fancied it made her look younger than if painted within doors. It is pleasant to think of Reynolds placing his easel in

MARY, DUCHESS OF ANCASTER

(*From the mezzotint by Spooner*)

the grounds of Holland House, and working at that painting, in which all that was then alive, and full of youth, beauty, and intellect is now departed; and only the background of the good old building remains as it was when he painted its old red brick walls and mullioned windows.

During the coronation year many of the great Court ladies sat to Reynolds; among the principal of these were the Duchess of Ancaster, who was Mistress of the Robes to the young Queen, and Ladies Spencer, Northampton, and Pembroke; and one of the most beautiful among a bevy of beautiful women, the Countess Waldegrave, whom Reynolds seems to have taken quite a passion in painting, as her lovely face appears many times on his canvases. The most beautiful is that glorious half-length of her at Nuneham, where she gazes upwards with a truly inspired look; to look on that portrait is like hearing a heavenly symphony.

More memorable to Reynolds than even these sittings from ladies of the great world in the year 1761, was his making the acquaintance in the month of May of a singular looking young Irishman, with uncouth manners, and an almost comically plain featured face. This acquaintance soon became a warm friendship, which only ceased with Oliver Goldsmith's death; a friendship destined to be as memorable as that between Reynolds and Johnson, for Goldsmith had as honoured a place in Reynolds' home as even Burke or the great Sam himself; and no other of the painter's friends deserved a more loyal admiration for the best gifts of heart and brain than that queer-looking, long-lipped, untidy young Irishman, the poor (in worldly goods) but truly inspired author of the immortal "Vicar of Wakefield"—Goldsmith, who, with Garrick, Burke, and Johnson, had always an honoured place at Reynolds' fireside in Leicester Fields.

Of all English, and, for that matter, of all European actors, the name of David Garrick stands foremost. Although he was of French origin, we can claim Garrick as one of ourselves. In the art of acting, one of the rarest of gifts, and among the higher of the fine arts, Garrick may be said to have had rivals, but no equal, for both in tragedy and comedy his talent was consummate. Reynolds has left us many portraits of the great mime, one of him between the figures of Tragedy and Comedy. In this painting one observes that although Tragedy has the stronger hand as she seeks to draw the actor to her side, the Muse of Comedy for the moment prevails; he appears to be in the act of saying to the sterner muse, "Behold my position; Comedy is leading me a pretty dance; I must e'en foot it with her for a while, and after I will return to your realm, where there is no laughter, but tragic tears and dark despair." Indeed how can he resist the joyous goddess on his right, for do we not recognise the sprightly witchery and roguish face of Mrs Abingdon, luring him to the primrose path where all is bright and joyous, and no shadows cross the flowery way, along which she gambols, carrying David in her train.

This group of figures, which was one of his most popular imaginary paintings, and of which the engraving sold by hundreds, was formerly at Knole. It was painted in 1761, and it was exhibited at the Rooms of the Society of Artists in Spring Gardens (the precursor of the Royal Academy) in the following year, at the same time as the full length of Lady Elizabeth Keppel, now at Woburn Abbey, and of Lady Waldegrave, formerly at Strawberry Hill, that Frances, Lady Waldegrave, left to the Duc d'Aumale, and which is now the property of the French nation, at Chantilly. This portrait of the beautiful Countess, who became Duchess of Gloucester, was named in the catalogue of the Exhibition, *Dido embracing Cupid.*

To have painted over a hundred portraits in one year was too much even for Reynolds' splendid constitution; and probably he suffered from the strain, for the following year (1762) he left London and paid some country visits. We hear of him with the Bedfords at Woburn Abbey, and in the autumn he paid his beloved Devonshire a visit, accompanied by Johnson, a doubtfully agreeable, however highly honoured, travelling companion. They left London on the sixteenth of August, remaining a day at Winchester, thence they posted to Salisbury and paid Wilton a visit, where, in that splendid home of the Herberts, and in the noblest drawing-room in England, one can imagine Reynolds' delight on seeing Vandyck's glorious group of the Pembroke family. They also visited Longford Castle, then rich in Holbeins, the finest of which, the painting known as *The Ambassadors*, is one of the greatest treasures of our National Gallery. At Longford they remained a night, and then they passed on due west, *via* Blandford and Exeter, where they arrived on the twenty-third of August. The next day they visited Torrington, where they passed a couple of days with Reynolds' two married sisters, Mrs Palmer and Mrs Johnson.

Thence our voyagers went to Okehampton, and reached Plymouth on the twenty-ninth, where they stayed with Reynolds' old friend Mudge, and made many expeditions in the neighbourhood. One day they visited the new Eddystone Lighthouse; three years had only passed since it had risen for a second time amidst the waves, but the sea was too rough to enable them to land on the rock at its base.

They returned homewards on the twenty-third of September, and arrived in London two days later.

One regrets that Boswell was not with them to record Johnson's sayings during that Devonian tour; for the

only incident which has come to us of him was recorded by Miss Reynolds, Joshua's sister, who used in after years to describe the ponderous doctor running a race with a young lady on the lawn of a Devonshire house, and in his eagerness to reach the goal kicking off his slippers as he careered over the grass; and of his delight at winning the race; it must have been a somewhat elephantine performance on the part of the great Sam, and would have been a good subject for Leslie's pencil as a pendant to his delightful picture of Uncle Toby and the Widow Wadman.

Reynolds' friend, biographer, and fellow-countryman, the painter Northcote, in his "Memoirs of Sir Joshua Reynolds," which was published in 1798 (in the same year as appeared Malone's "Works of Sir J. Reynolds"), writes that it was about this time that he first saw Reynolds, although for years he had been a great admirer of the Master's works, some of which he had seen at Plymouth. During a public meeting in that town young Northcote got as near to Reynolds in the crowd as was possible, and reverently touched (much as Reynolds had done in the case of Pope) the skirt of the great artist's coat, "with," he writes, "great satisfaction" to his feelings. We see by this incident that Reynolds, while still under forty, was, unlike the Prophet in the Scriptures, of some account in his own country.

Hanfstängl photo] [*Buckingham Palace*

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS IN MIDDLE LIFE

(*Painted by himself*)

CHAPTER III

THE ROYAL ACADEMY

1763–1771

REYNOLDS' pocket-book for 1763 is lost. He had at that date raised his prices; for a full-length he charged one hundred and fifty guineas, for a half-length seventy, for a kit-cat (head and shoulders) fifty guineas. He is supposed to have been the first English portrait painter who made his sitters pay a deposit down in advance, of one half the price of the completed picture.

During 1763 the most popular of comic actresses, Mrs Abingdon, sat frequently to him, and in a variety of characters and attitudes. She appears in her favourite part of *Lady Teazle* in one; as *Roxalana* in another; and more than once as the Comic Muse, notably in the portrait of Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy. Perhaps the portrait which gives us the loveliest idea of the delightful pert little face is of her in the part of *Miss Prue*, in Congreve's now forgotten, but at that time popular comedy, "Love for Love." She is leaning over the back of a chair, a little dog is barking by her side; a more delightful portrait of a pretty actress does not exist.

Early in the next year, 1764, the famous "Literary Club" was founded. Reynolds is said to have been its originator, backed by Johnson. Reynolds was essentially what the great doctor called a thoroughly "clubbable man." The new Club, which soon got to be known as

"The Club," had its habitation at the Turk's Head Tavern in Gerard Street, Soho. Later on it migrated to St James', and settled down at the Thatched House Tavern; when that building was pulled down, "The Club" —which still thrives—held its meetings at the Clarendon Hotel. For this Club Reynolds painted his own likeness, with spectacles on nose—one pair of those famous spectacles which are among Lady Colomb's treasures and relics of her illustrious great-great-uncle—and wearing a mulberry coloured coat. In this portrait Reynolds, who was but forty-one, looks at least a decade older; the face is full and florid, the eyes appear dim behind the round glasses of the heavily set spectacles; the nose thick; the scar which disfigured his mouth after his fall from horseback at Minorca shows upon his upper lip; the brow is broad and serene. The general effect is that of a portrait of a well-to-do and prosperous physician. Altogether there is little trace of the handsome youth as we see him in the chalk drawing made from life by himself when seventeen, which is here reproduced from the original at Nuneham, by the kind permission of Mr Aubrey Harcourt.

Reynolds also painted and presented his portrait to the Dilettanti Club, each member of that Club being obliged to do the same; although Reynolds had the advantage of being able to give his own likeness by his own hand.

In the Dilettanti portrait Reynolds has painted himself without his spectacles, his hair unpowdered, and in a loose robe. For that Club he also painted two splendid groups of its members; these now hang in the Club room at the Grafton Gallery. He acknowledged that in these works he had in his mind some of Paul Veronese's great portrait groups; and they bear comparison even with that greatest of decorative painters. The Dilettantis as well as "The Club" met at the Thatched House, and among

RELICS OF SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

(By special permission of Lady Colomb)

the titled nonentities introduced on these canvases, are the fairly intellectual heads of Sir Joseph Banks and Sir William Hamilton. Among some of the best known Members of "The Club" were Burke, Bennet Langton, Oliver Goldsmith, Topham Beauclerk, and the "unclubbable" Sir John Hawkins, all these being original members.

During the summer of the year 1764 Reynolds was seriously ill. It was on his recovery from what had been a dangerous illness that Johnson wrote him that touching letter, so full of affection, to which I have already alluded. In it Johnson offers to come immediately back to see Reynolds; the doctor was at the time at Plymouth; "if," as he writes in his own Johnsonian manner, "the amusement of my company can exhilarate the languor of a slow recovery." Johnson's letter was dated the 19th of August, 1764, and was written at the time that Hogarth lay ill at Chiswick, and soon to die at his house at Leicester Fields; three days before that letter was written by Johnson, Hogarth had signed his will, feeling the grip of death upon him. One could wish that some trait of friendship might be proved between the great painters, Reynolds and Hogarth, even the reconciliation at the eleventh hour which took place between Reynolds and his great rival Gainsborough. After Hogarth's death Reynolds bore testimony to Hogarth's talent, for he referred to his work as "a new species of dramatic painting, in which, probably, he will never be equalled," but in life they were not on friendly, even if they were on speaking, terms.

Reynolds made a strange friendship at this period of his life, with the last person in the world that one would have expected the somewhat precise and formal artist to like, John Wilkes—the notorious demagogue and never too respectable politician.

In the year 1766 Wilkes' name frequently occurs among Reynolds' guests in Leicester Fields. It was a friendship that, as Leslie shrewdly observes, was personal, not political. Reynolds was a consistent Whig, but not an ultra Whig, and not by any means a demagogue; and like all men of good position and high respectability had reverence to the powers that be, both in earth and in heaven. Wilkes was a notorious free-thinker, coarse, even in that age of coarseness, in word and in thought, a scoffer against all that is considered respectable, reputable or reverential. That Wilkes had a wonderful charm, that his brilliant wit, and his sense of prodigious humour, made him a delightful dinner companion, was undeniable, and it was in that capacity, we think, that Reynolds appreciated his company. One remembers that even the great Samuel Johnson, who hated Wilkes like the very devil, thawed when they met at Mr Dilly's famous dinner, and was glad to have the opportunity of meeting Wilkes again in the same house on another occasion, when Bozzy found them sitting *tête-à-tête*, "their heads leaning almost to each other, and talking earnestly in a kind of confidential whisper, of the personal quarrel between George the Second and the King of Prussia." No wonder that Boswell compared these two to the lion lying down with the kid.

That very talented Swiss lady, Angelica Kauffmann, "Miss Angelica," as Reynolds writes her name in his pocket-book, or sometimes "Miss Angel," appears at this time, exhibiting in the Exhibition of Associated Painters a portrait of Garrick in 1765. Reynolds had first met Angelica at Lord Spencer's. She soon became a fervent admirer of Reynolds, whom she declared to her friends was "incomparable"; she also wrote to her father, "He is one of my kindest friends, and never ceases praising me to everyone. As a proof of his

Hanfstängl photo] [*Earl Spencer*

ANGELICA KAUFFMANN

Hanfstängl photo] [*Glasgow Gallery*

A LADY

SUPPOSED TO BE ANGELICA KAUFFMANN

admiration for me, he has asked me to sit for my picture to him, and in return I am to paint him." There is no sign here of any professional jealousy on Reynolds' side, although his detractors would make him out to have that small and unmanly vice. As a matter of course it was given out that Reynolds was in love with Angelica; but there was nothing better than the malicious imagination of the scandalmongers of the day to prove this to be so.

During the summer of 1767 Reynolds was wont to pass Sunday either with Owen Cambridge at his villa at Twickenham, or with Garrick at his at Hampton. Besides these two old friends of his he knew most of the fashionable folk in that neighbourhood; among them was Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill, which he was then adding to, and filling with pictures and curios; the actor Colman, and that brilliant woman and actress, Mrs Clive.

It was in the next year that Reynolds took a house at Richmond. This house still exists, but within and without it is quite changed from its state when Reynolds occasionally lived there; and but one chimney piece remains in one of its ground floor rooms which could have been seen by the painter and his friends. This house, now called Wick House, is the first of two villas on the right of the Star and Garter Hotel, as you face the river front, and is now the property of Mr Schiller. Fortunately the view remains much in all essentials as when Reynolds gazed over one of the fairest landscapes that even our beautiful land possesses; "that unrivalled view," as Sir Walter Scott has truly called it in one of his greatest novels.

1768 is a memorable date in the history of English Art. In the autumn of that year Reynolds was for a few weeks in Paris with his friend Richard Burke, Edmund's brother. Concerning this trip Reynolds' notes are of the scantiest.

During Reynolds' absence from London some of his friends met to discuss a scheme then in the air for the foundation of a new Annual Exhibition of painting and sculpture. The old Society of Artists was at that time in a moribund condition; and Reynolds and his friends had felt for some time previously to that autumn of 1768 that London should have an Annual Exhibition resembling the Exhibition of French artists' works held annually in Paris, with the King as patron. Foremost of those who favoured this new English Art Exhibition was the architect Sir William Chambers, whose greatest achievement is the noble pile of Somerset House. Chambers was a *persona grata* at Court, and he was deputed to wait on the King to obtain his consent and patronage. Benjamin West, another of King George's favourites, who was destined many years later to succeed Reynolds in the Presidential chair of the Royal Academy, and Cotes, the then fashionable portrait painter, with Moser, another successful artist, were among the principal supporters of the scheme.

At the beginning of December a prospectus of the new institution was laid before King George, which met the royal approval. Reynolds was unanimously chosen to fill the place of President, and the first general meeting was held on the 14th of December. Whether the Royal Academy of Arts (to give the new institution its full title) has been a useful and beneficent one for the Art of this country is an open question. Some of our greatest painters have held aloof from it. It has never been free from jealousies and quarrels; but this may be said to be the case with all human institutions. Sooner or later England was bound to have an Academy of Arts, and until the country can get a better, let us be thankful that ours is such as it is. Whatever its future, the Royal Academy of London will always bear the imperishable

Hanfstängl photo] [*Earl Spencer*

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST

honour of having had for its first President, Sir Joshua Reynolds.

It is not necessary for me to give an account of the Royal Academy in this sketch of the life of Sir Joshua Reynolds. The following notice from the Annual Register for the year 1768 sums up in a sentence its main cause of existence:

"The principal object of this institution is to be the establishment of well-regulated schools of design, where students in the art may find that instruction which has so long been wanted, and so long wished for in this country." Whether this object has been carried out during the last century and a half, must he answered by the professors and students themselves.

Reynolds worked hard in organising the new Academy of Arts, and threw all his energy into making it a success. Its first location was in the warehouse of engravings of Mr. Dalton, who, besides selling prints, was the King's Librarian and Keeper of the Royal Collection of Engravings; his rooms were in Pall Mall, near old Carlton House: later on the Art auctioneers, Messrs. Christie, took these rooms.

In 1771 the King gave rooms for the use of the Academy, in Somerset House, but not for the Exhibition of paintings, which continued to be exhibited till the year 1780 in Dalton's galleries in Pall Mall. However, the Somerset House rooms were used for the Academy library, and also for lectures. When at length a new gallery had been built in Somerset House, the Annual Exhibitions were held there. Sir William Chambers was the architect of this gallery.

In 1838, the Academy Exhibitions were moved from Somerset House to the eastern wing of the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square, until the new Galleries, built by Banks and Barry, were completed. In 1854 the

Government bought Burlington House for £140,000. That noble old Piccadilly palace had been built by the architect, Lord Burlington, in 1743, and it was, with its impressive colonnade, the finest private mansion in the West-end of London. Much of this noble old pile remains, although the colonnade, which had excited Horace Walpole's admiration, was taken away; but the old staircase and the handsome Council-room and Library still appear much as when Lord Burlington lived there, when Gay sang its praises, and Hogarth painted it.

On the 2nd of January 1769, Reynolds delivered his first "Discourse" to the Members of the new Academy; his object in this, and in the lectures which followed year by year, was to show that Art is one of the great Liberal professions, and to prove that painting is a great and a serious object of sustained study, a study worthy to rank with the highest science, and not a mere pastime. It is doubtful whether these Discourses proved of practical use to the young painters and art students whom he addressed; they cannot be considered of much advantage to the followers of Art in later times, when, as is the case now, the so-called "Grand Style" in painting is practically non-existent, and when a far wider field of Art knowledge has been thrown open by the studies and practices of those who have studied Art during the past century. Reynolds' Discourses, with all their failings and limitations, will, however, be read even now by all who appreciate noble ideas and great thoughts rendered in pure and classic English; and, be it remembered, that these Discourses of Reynolds met with the suffrage and praise of both Samuel Johnson and Edmund Burke.

In his delivery Reynolds is reported to have been indistinct; this may have been owing to the injury which had marked his mouth, and his deafness may also have been a hindrance.

Hollyer photo] [*Earl of Crewe*

MRS CREWE AS ST GENEVIÈVE

By the end of the month the new Academy had commenced its work; courses of lectures were organised for the students, and a catalogue, with a preface written by Reynolds, was prepared.

On the 21st of April, Reynolds became Sir Joshua. Since the day of Sir James Thornhill, Reynolds was the first painter who received knighthood.

On the 26th of April, the first Royal Academy Exhibition was opened, and lasted a month. Sir Joshua exhibited four works. The finest of these was the painting called *Hope nursing Love.* The actress, Miss Morris, sat for Hope. Reynolds evidently liked his composition, and repeated it at least thrice. A sad episode attaches to this painting: the bright young actress, who was the daughter of Governor Morris, had, when she sat for her lovely profile to Sir Joshua, just commenced her career on the stage; in the course of the next year she had what is called "stage fright," fainted on the stage, and was carried out, never to appear again in a theatre; she died in the following year.

One *Hope nursing Love* is at Bowood—Lord Lansdowne's place—another at Port Eliot—Lord St Germans'—and a third at Sandye Place—Sir Robert Edgcumbe's. Another of Reynolds' works at this first Royal Academy was that beautiful group of Mrs Crewe, with her friend, Mrs Bouverie, the former the popular Whig Toast of the day, and one of the loveliest women of the time. Sir Joshua painted Mrs Crewe several times; besides this one of her with Mrs Bouverie, there is another portrait of her at Crewe Hall, in which she is supposed to be the patron shepherdess-saint of Paris, *Ste. Geneviève*; seated on a flowery bank, with her sheep around her, she has her eyes bent down in lowly contemplation. This painting is in tolerable preservation, and is one of Sir Joshua's most perfect creations.

Although working hard on his portraits, and much occupied with the business of the Academy, Sir Joshua appears at this time of his life to have combined amusement with study. We hear of his frequenting of an evening Mrs Cornely's famous masquerades in Soho Square, then all the fashion; and of his appearance in the gay crowd at Vauxhall, then the most brilliant of *ridottos*. Middle-aged men can recall the dismal, bedraggled scene as the lights faded in that former place of revelry, now built over by streets and squares. We have in London in these days nothing to compare with the Vauxhall of the early days of George III. The place had been lavishly embellished with decorations, and even by paintings from the brush of Hogarth, de Loutherbourg, and Hayman; in the groves of its gardens stood statues designed by Roubiliac; the beautiful Billington sang at the concerts, and the great musician, Dr Arne, conducted the band of violinists. In its decorated boxes sat nightly all that was highest, gayest, and most beautiful in the world of pleasure. The *jeunesse dorée* of both sexes stood up in the stately minuet, blue ribbons and stars glittered in the country dances, and beautiful peeresses swam and glided between the lines of dancers.

Paris itself during the Regency and under Louis XV. had nothing to compare with Vauxhall of those days. Thackeray has illustrated with pen and pencil Sir Joshua and Oliver Goldsmith passing an idle hour at the Pantheon; both wore fancy dress, for at the Pantheon fancy dress was the vogue. Sir Joshua is easily recognised, in spite of his domino, by his thick rimmed spectacles and the huge trumpet which he holds to his ear, while Goldy, who is attired in cavalier fashion, is holding forth to his illustrious companion. It is a delightful drawing by one great genius of two others.

Hollyer photo] [*Earl of Crewe*

MISS FRANCES CREWE

Hollyer photo] [*Earl of Crewe*

EMMA AND ELIZABETH, DAUGHTERS OF JOHN CREWE

Ranelagh was also a favourite resort, and on Monday nights Reynolds would often be found at the Turk's Head Tavern, one of the most convivial clubs of the day.

The 16th of October in the year 1769 is to be noted; for on that afternoon a dinner was given by Boswell in Old Bond Street, at which Garrick, Reynolds, and Johnson were among the guests; and it was at this dinner that Goldsmith wore his famous plum-coloured suit, with a satin lining, the work of Mr John Filby, tailor, at the sign of the Harrow in Water Lane.

The portrait of Goldsmith, which Sir Joshua painted that year, was exhibited in 1779, and was formerly at Knole. Of that portrait of the poet-novelist, Leslie writes the following:—"I have seen nothing on canvas more touching—not even by that master of pathos, Gainsborough—than Reynolds' portrait of Goldsmith. It recalls all that is known of the sufferings of the tenderest and warmest of hearts. In that thoughtful, patient face the traces of a life of endurance, and the consciousness of being misunderstood and undervalued, are as unmistakeable as the benevolence that is meditating how to amuse and make better a world by which it was considered a vulgar face, and which had treated the owner of it so scurvily. But Reynolds, not being one of the vulgar, saw no vulgarity in the head of Goldsmith; and we may be sure he did not agree with many of his friends in considering him 'very like a young man tailor,' or with Miss Reynolds, in thinking him 'the ugliest of men.'"

At this time Reynolds was also painting that singularly unpleasant group of Ugolino with his sons, which is, we believe, still at Knole. This work was exhibited with the portrait of Goldsmith. This Ugolino cannot be considered one of Sir Joshua's successful creations; although powerful in treatment and striking in light and shadow,

the subject is not one which can be looked on without pain—to live with it would be like being saddled to a nightmare.

Perhaps, from a feeling of gratitude for having painted his portrait, Goldsmith dedicated his "Deserted Village" to Sir Joshua. This poem was published in the early summer of 1770.

"You can gain nothing," writes Goldsmith in his dedication to Sir Joshua, "from my admiration, as I am ignorant of the art in which you are said to excel, and I may lose much by the severity of your judgment, as few have a juster taste in poetry than you."

The success of Goldsmith's poem was great; in a few months' time, from the date of its publication, it had run into its fifth edition.

At this period of Reynolds' life, Goldsmith and he appear to have been much together, and many an evening they spent either in the lamp-lit gardens of Ranelagh and Vauxhall, while the summer lasted, or at the "Devil," "Globe," or the "Crown and Anchor" Tavern, in the Strand; the latter, one of Johnson's favourite haunts. It was at the "Crown and Anchor" that one evening when Reynolds was praising wine, and saying that it helped conversation, that Johnson was heard growling that, as far as Reynolds was concerned, he had not heard of any of his "vinous flights."

There is little doubt that poor Oliver Goldsmith, with all his faults, foibles, and little affectations and vanities, was a most delightful companion. Neither can one doubt the love and affection, and deep sense of gratitude that the inspired little Irishman felt in his heart of hearts towards Sir Joshua—the most "invulnerable" man, as Johnson said of him.

Goldsmith had the courage of his opinions, and on one occasion rebuked his friend for having painted a portrait

Gray photo] [*Oxford University Galleries*

JAMES PAINE, THE ARCHITECT, AND HIS SON

of Dr Beattie. It was painted at the time of the "Ugolino." Sir Joshua placed an angel by the side of the Scotch professor-poet, whose attack on Voltaire and Hume in an allegorical poem had made a sensation, while below the figure were Voltaire and Hume as the demons of infidelity. "It is," said Goldsmith to Reynolds, "unworthy of you to debase so high a genius as Voltaire before so mean a writer as Beattie." One hopes Sir Joshua felt the justice of Goldsmith's rebuke. That is the only instance in which Reynolds showed a lack of good taste in any of his paintings.

During the month of August 1770, Reynolds visited Yorkshire, for in York and in its neighbourhood he had many friends; and, although I have not been able to find any mention of his doing so, he probably visited Castle Howard, where were already some of his portraits of the young Earl of Carlisle and his beautiful wife, Caroline Gower. The former he painted on several occasions, both in boyhood and after he had reached man's estate.

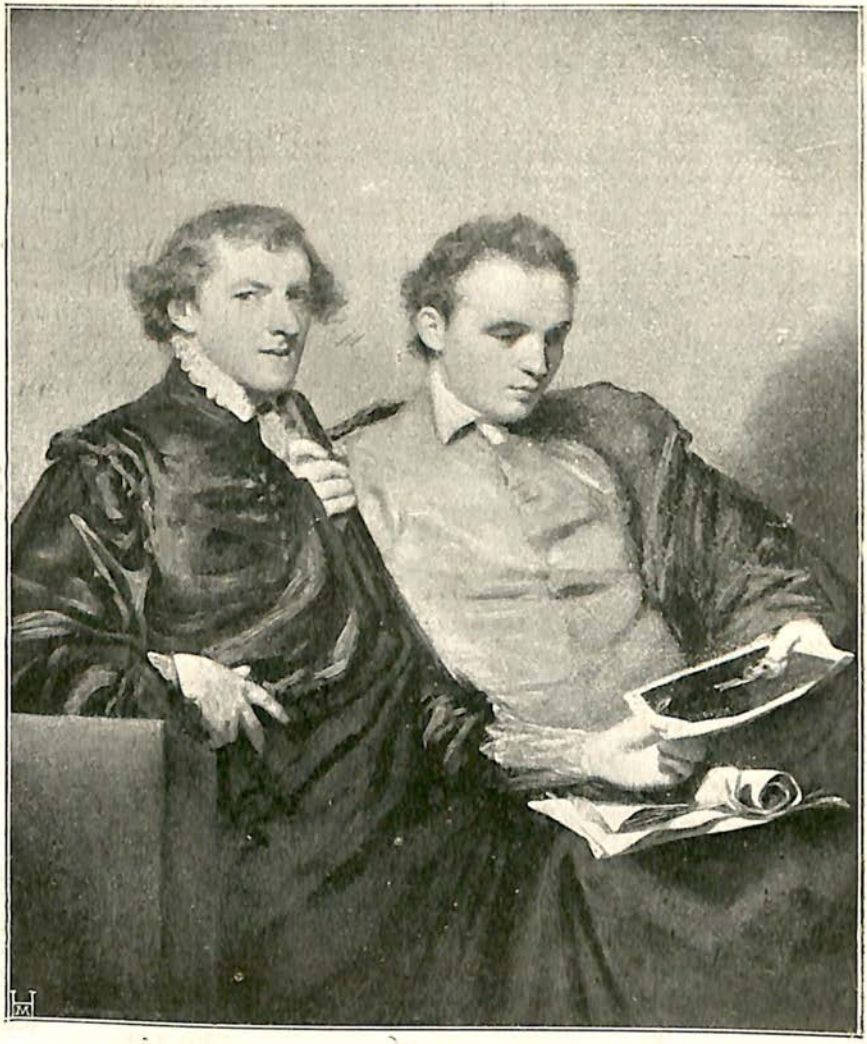
In September and October, Reynolds went to Devonshire. While on a visit to Lord Edgcumbe, he went out shooting and hunting, and also when staying at the Parkers at Saltram. While staying with his sister, Mrs Palmer (whose husband had died early that year), he persuaded her to allow him to take her daughter, Theophila, who was then thirteen, back to London with him. Three years after, Mary Palmer, Theophila's sister (the future Marchioness of Thomond) joined her sister and uncle in Leicester Fields, where they remained till their marriages. "Offie," as the eldest was nicknamed, married Mr Gwatkin of Killiow, and lived till 1843. Lady Thomond died in 1820.

Writing of Sir Joshua's nieces, Fanny Burney says that "they added to the grace of his table, and of his

evening circles, by their pleasing manners and the beauty of their persons."

That Lady Thomond was handsome, if not beautiful, is proved by the portraits painted of her by her uncle, and also by Sir Thomas Lawrence. "Offie" also sat frequently to Sir Joshua for her portrait, and he introduced her bright face into many of his imaginary paintings.

At the close of that year Reynolds gave his third Discourse to the Royal Academy, after distributing the medals gained by the students. Among the latter figures the name of John Flaxman, then a youth of fifteen, destined to leave as great a name in the annals of British Art as that of Sir Joshua himself in the sister branch of sculpture. Reynolds' third Discourse inculcated the need for the study of "the great style" in painting. He winds up his thesis by saying that "the whole beauty and grandeur of the art consists in being able to get above all singular forms, local customs, particularities, and details of every kind."



Hanfstängl photo] [*National Gallery*

PORTRAITS OF TWO GENTLEMEN

CHAPTER IV

YEAR BY YEAR

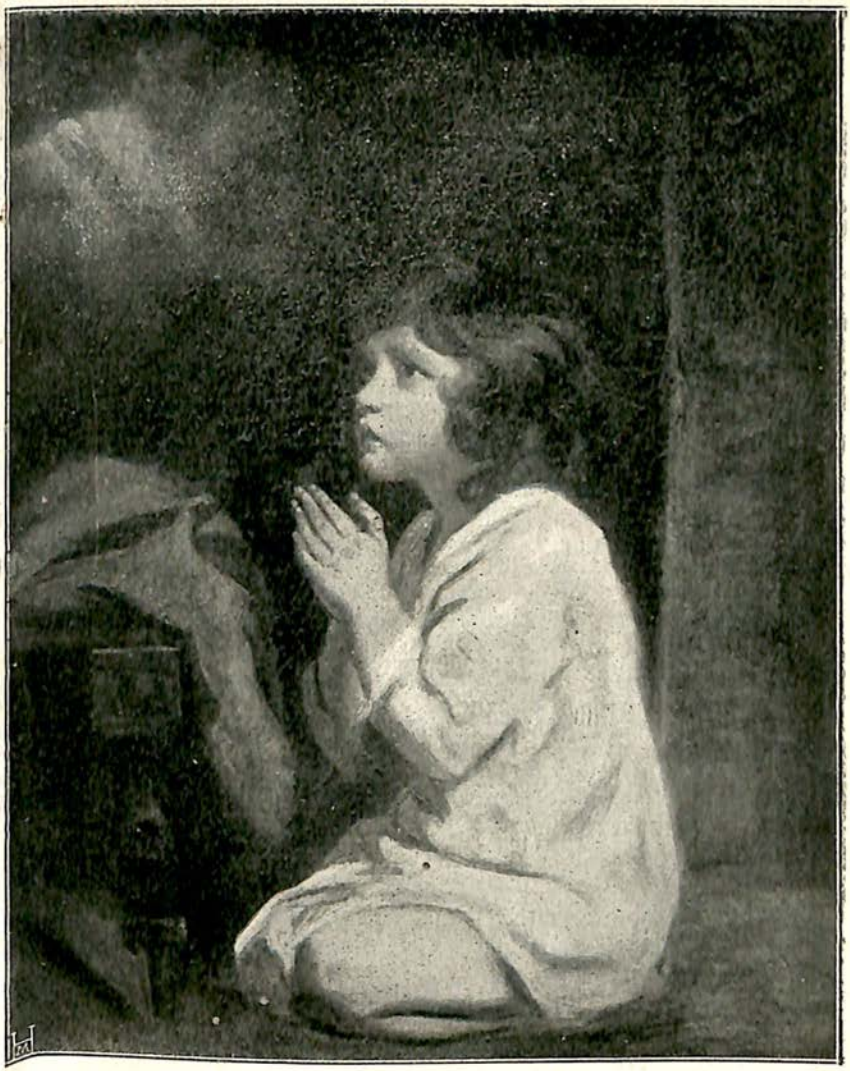
1771–1775

DURING the year 1771 the President's list of sitters shows a notable decline in numbers from that of the former year. Perhaps this was owing to the agitated state that London was then in, torn by political quarrels; and possibly by the vogue which had set in for sitting to the new young portrait painter, George Romney, who had come to London in 1761, and who was now all the fashion. Reynolds appears to have had no liking for Romney and his works, and spoke of him with an acerbity rare in his usually just and calm nature. Romney returned the dislike of Reynolds towards him with interest, nothing could induce him to send a picture to the Academy Exhibition; but he had an exhibition of his works in Spring Gardens. London was divided into two cliques, or "factions," as Lord Chancellor Thurlow called them, he himself belonging to the Romney one. Reynolds would never mention Romney by name, and spoke of him as "the man in Cavendish Square." "Certain it is," wrote Northcote, "that Sir Joshua was not much employed in portraits after Romney grew in fashion." Northcote is not quite correct in this statement, for although Romney's popularity may have reduced the number of Reynolds' sitters, the latter held his own as the greatest portrait painter of his day till failing sight compelled him to lay down his brush.

The President's politics were caviare to the Royal Court; and his friendship with Wilkes was a subject of scandal to the brainless courtiers who frequented St James' and Buckingham House. Although Reynolds had painted George III. and Queen Charlotte in their coronation robes, the King had never given his patronage to the greatest painter of his time, preferring the inanities of Benjamin West to Reynolds' masterly portraits.

The Royal Academy met for the first time in their new rooms in Somerset House in the middle of January 1771 — these rooms included the lodgings of the Keeper, the Library, Schools, and Council Chamber— but, as has already been said, the yearly Exhibition still took place in Pall Mall. The first Academy Dinner was held on the 23rd of April. Among the diners that evening were Dr Johnson and Goldsmith, both professors of the new Academy. From small beginnings this annual Academy Dinner has grown into a banquet rivalling the Lord Mayor's feast on the 9th of November at the Guildhall. It is not apparent what good effect this yearly banquet has ever had on the Fine Arts.

There is an interesting notice written at the time by John Courtenay, Member of Parliament for Tamworth. "Generally," he says, "Sir Joshua's guests numbered some eight persons, but often twice that number dined; these dinners were somewhat like a picnic, for the guests helped themselves to the food and drinks; the wine, cookery, and dishes were but little attended to, nor was the fish or venison ever talked of or remembered. Sir Joshua had the good manners never to keep his other guests waiting for an unpunctual one, let him be who he will; his friend and intimate acquaintance," adds Courtenay, "will ever love his memory, and will long regret those social hours, and the cheerfulness



Hanfstängl photo] [*National Gallery*

THE INFANT SAMUEL

Mansell photo] [*Wallace Gallery*

THE STRAWBERRY GIRL

of the irregular convivial table, which no one has attempted to revive or imitate, or was indeed qualified to supply." What dinners those scrambly ones in 54 Leicester Fields must have been! What a flow of rare talk must have circled around that board, from such men as Wilkes and Goldsmith, Johnson and Burke, as they sat through the long afternoons, the benign President at their head, with trumpet to his ear trying hard to hear the sallies of wit and humour.

In the early summer Reynolds painted many of his most successful imaginary pictures; generally the model a pretty girl or a handsome lad, some of them found in the streets, and brought into the studio, where they sat as youthful deities; for instance that little link-boy, who is transformed into a Cupid, but although bewinged still plies his humble trade, another who is turned into a Mercury; at other times Reynolds transforms his pretty niece, Offie, into Comedy or a sprite; in one canvas she appears as a demure little maiden, on another as a shy little romp. One, perhaps the most popular, of Reynolds' pictures of childhood, is that kneeling child, called *The Infant Samuel*, a picture which has been copied and repeated in every form of plastic art thousands of times; and its beauty not even chromolithography can destroy or vulgarize; another widely known child's portrait is the group of angels' heads (now in the National Gallery), which were all taken from one little girl. Sir Joshua is reported to have said that his little *Strawberry Girl* was one of the half dozen original creations that he could claim; and that no artist ever produced more original works than that magic half dozen. He painted the *Strawberry Girl* at least twice; the best is that in the Gallery at Hertford House. That painting was bought by the banker-poet, Rogers; after his death it was bought in 1855 by Lord Carysfort for fifty guineas; when it again changed

hands it was sold to Lord Hertford for forty times as much. One is glad to know that it now belongs to the nation.

Among Reynolds' models was a handsome old Irish beggar named George White, who often posed to the President; he is the *Ugolino* in the group at Knole; and one may recognise his fine old grey head and beard in many of Reynolds' works.

In that summer Sir Joshua also painted that delightful work called *Venus chiding Cupid*, which was, and perhaps still is, at Lord Charlemont's in Dublin; it was beautifully copied by Bartolozzi in stipple; another somewhat similar picture is that called *A Nymph and Bacchus*. *A portrait of a Girl reading* is one of his likenesses of his niece, Theophila Palmer.

It was during this year that the future art critic and author, as well as painter, James Northcote, the son of a Plymouth watchmaker, became an inmate at Number Fifty-four. His family name, his strong Devon accent, and his facility for painting recommended him in a short time to Reynolds. Northcote was then in his twenty-fifth year; from the portrait painted of him fifty years later he must have been a handsome youth. Northcote's pictures, which were of that unfortunate kind then known as "high art," are not to be commended; terribly stagy in composition and unpleasant in colouring, they belong to the school of which Fuseli was the most original among the painters of that generation. What makes his name to live in our recollection is that he was the first biographer of his illustrious friend and master. Northcote began his career in London by being a pupil and copyist of Sir Joshua. Before long he had made a name for himself; and, thanks to Alderman Boydell, produced some, and those not the worst, of the huge compositions after Shakespeare's Historical Plays, in company with Romney,

Walker & Cockerell photo] [*National Portrait Gallery*

THE EARL OF CHARLEMONT

Fieschi, and Reynolds. In the year 1813 Northcote's "Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds" was published, the most reliable book on him that we have. Northcote lived far into the last century, a venerable link between the centuries, and died in 1831.

Besides Northcote, there were two other pupils living in Leicester Fields; one of them named Gill, the other Clarke, the latter recommended by Goldsmith, "a reckless dog," Northcote calls him. Of Reynolds' behaviour to his pupils Northcote writes: "The first day I went to paint there I saw one of Sir Joshua's pupils, and on conversing with him was much surprised to find that his scholars were absolute strangers to Sir Joshua's manner of working, and that he makes use of colours and varnishes which they know nothing of, and always painted in a room distant from them; that they never saw him unless he wanted to paint a head or a piece of drapery from them, and then they were always dismissed as soon as he had done with them." From this one may infer that Reynolds had no wish of letting his assistants learn the tricks of the trade—and this was but natural; but how different the feeling shown by the great Italian masters, whose pupils were always allowed not only to study with, but help, the "Maestro," in all the details of the work, from the preparation of the wall or panel and the grinding and mixing of the colours, on to the final touches of the easel-painting or fresco. Art in England will never flourish unless the artist is willing and also anxious to show to others how to labour and how to succeed in all the various branches of his profession, in his most difficult, but when successful, thankful, toil. Northcote writes: "It was very provoking, after I had been for hours labouring on the drapery of one of the portraits from a lay figure, to see him, with a few masterly sweeps of his pencil, destroy nearly all my work, and turn it into something much

fairer; and yet, but for my work, it would not have been what he made it."

At the end of the year Reynolds gave his fourth Discourse. In it he attempted to show that generality ennobles, while particularity debases art. The President summed up his argument thus: "On the whole it seems to me that there is but one presiding principle which regulates and gives stability to every art. The works, whether of poets, painters, moralists, or historians, which are built on general nature, live for ever; while those which depend for their existence on particular habits, a partial view of nature, or the fluctuations of fashion; can only be coeval with that which first raised them from obscurity. Present times and future may be considered as rivals, and he who solicits the one must expect to be discountenanced by the other."

Early in the next year, 1772, Reynolds began painting for the rich brewer, Thrale, a series of portraits of his friends, among whom he counted some of the most illustrious of the men of that day, for his house at Streatham.

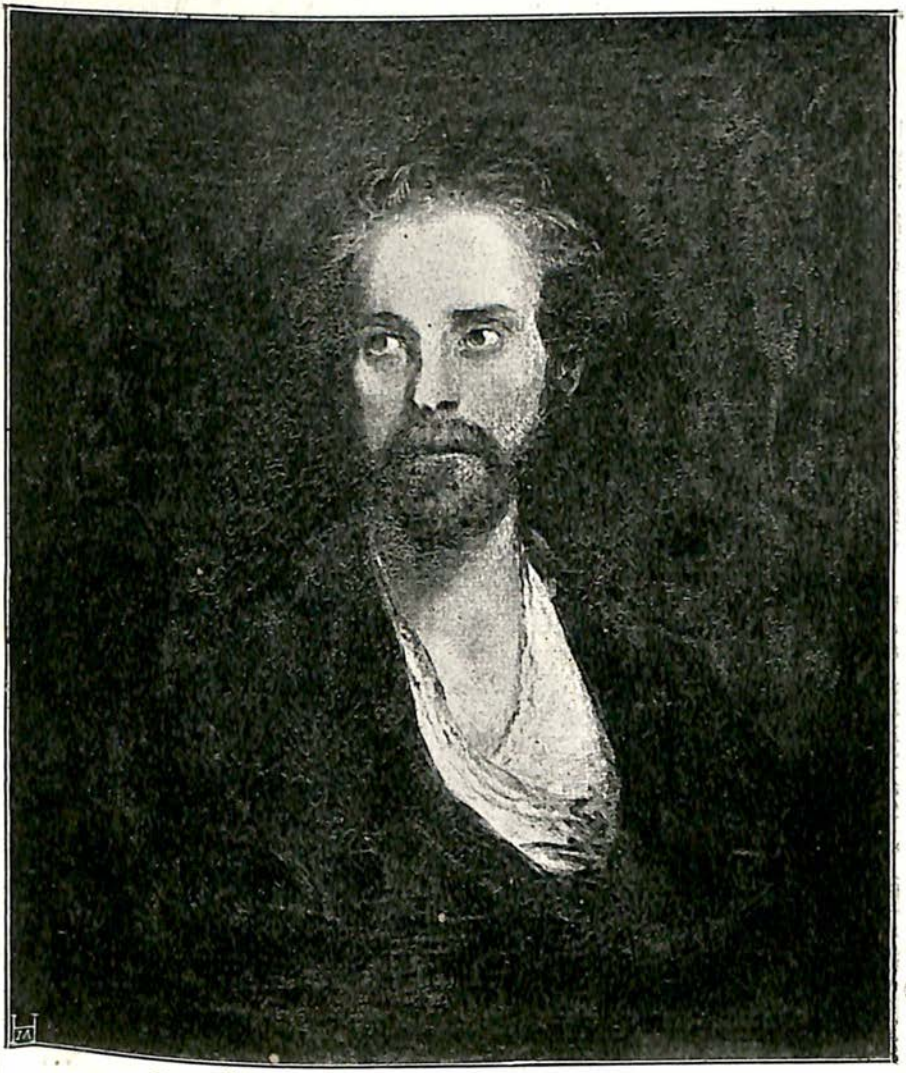
In February Dr Johnson again sat to the President; so did the Garricks. Among other great ladies the Duchesses of Buccleugh and Gloucester (*née* Lutterell and the widow of Mr Horton), and another Royal Duchess, of Gloucester, born Waldegrave, and the mother of the three beautiful daughters that Sir Joshua afterwards immortalised on a canvas which used to be the glory of Strawberry Hill.

The portraits for Streatham included Burke as well as Johnson, and the President's own portrait as well.

In September his native town elected the Knight of Plympton an Alderman—and soon after, Mayor. Sir Joshua was touched and pleased at this mark of respect shown him by his fellow-townsmen and on the back of

Gray photo] [*Oxford University Galleries*

MRS MEYRICK



Hanfstängl photo] [*National Gallery*

THE BANISHED LORD

the well-known half-length portrait which he painted of himself and presented to the gallery of the Uffizi at Florence, he inscribed the following: "necnon oppidi natalis, dicti Plimpton, comitatu Devon: praefectus, justiciarius, morumque censor." That Reynolds took an honest pride in this attention of the Plymptonians is proved by his having met the King about this time at Kew or at Richmond, who congratulated Reynolds on his new appointment; the President said he felt it to be the highest honour that he had ever received, when, recollecting his knighthood in time, he added, "except that which your Majesty was graciously pleased to confer on me."

In 1773, Sir Joshua attained his fiftieth year. He had already made a great name, and now enjoyed an European reputation. His life flowed down through time like some stately river, tranquil and serene. That life was a well filled one; no artist has enjoyed a more prosperous career; his work was congenial to his tastes, and he had the satisfaction of feeling that when old age came upon him and the close of his career made itself felt, he had employed his great talent to the best advantage, both for himself, and for those who were dear to him. He knew, too, that he had not only resuscitated the highest art in portraiture which his country had seen, but that he had removed the slur from England of having been, when his labours commenced, below other European nations in that department of painting, and had raised it to the highest rank it had ever attained.

After his fiftieth year Sir Joshua laboured less strenuously. He had made his great reputation during the first decade of his coming to live in London; and instead of painting some hundred portraits a year, produced in the next score of years on an average between fifty and sixty. He now gave more of his time to painting those beautiful portraits of children, which are among the happiest of his

creations; such as his Muscipulas, and Robinettas, his Dorindas and Pucks, his infant Samuels, and infant Samuel Johnsons.

One of Sir Joshua's most beautiful, and from the early death of the little sitter, most pathetic portraits, is that of little Penelope Boothby, seated, with her little mittened folded hands, with a mob cap over the fair locks of her pretty, sad little face. The original died soon after Sir Joshua painted her; but besides this likeness of little Penelope, there is in the Church where she is buried at Ashbourne, a beautiful recumbent marble figure of her by Thomas Banks. The following letter, in the possession of Lady Boothby, was copied by Mrs Thwaites, to whose kindness in copying it I am indebted. It throws a pleasant light upon one side of Sir Joshua's character:—

"And now comes the story of this little girl, scarcely then in her sixth year. She was missing from her pleasant home. High and low, all over the house and all about the lovely grounds, had her anxious mother, her young aunt and sister, and every servant looked for and called their little Penelope. She was nowhere to be found—at least so it seemed; certainly not in the fine old house, even in the most unused nook and corner. Her own devoted nurse was very sick in bed that day, and they did not venture at first to disturb her with news of her missing pet. But, as the vain search continued, they could no longer delay seeking wise Joan's advice and sympathy. 'Go to the studio for her,' said the sick woman; 'this is one of the days I take her there.' It seemed incredible to the distressed family that their little child could have attempted to thread her way through the crowded streets of London. Yet they hastened to follow Joan's advice, and, as soon as the carriage could be brought, Miss Boothby and her sister were off at a quick pace for Leicester Square, where Sir Joshua had his studio. They never forgot how long that drive seemed to them; but their anxiety was all over the moment they stepped within the painted, rich, octagonal studio, for there, safe and happy enough, they found the little runaway, under the watchful care of Sir Joshua and his beautiful niece, Offy Palmer. She was fast asleep after her long walk, snugly curled up in the elevated arm-chair where dukes and duchesses, lords and ladies,

Hanfstängl photo] [*National Gallery*

THE GRACES DECORATING A TERMINAL FIGURE OF HYMEN

and very many children had sat for their portraits. Upon his little friend's unattended arrival, Sir Joshua had immediately sent a messenger to her home to tell her parents of their child's safety, but this messenger they had missed. You may well suppose there were great rejoicings at the round tea-table of the Boothby's that same evening! Sir Joshua dwelling with delight upon his astonishment and pleased surprise at the entrance of his little morning caller. A very precious memory, too, did this incident become to the loving heart of the great painter, when, not long after, his sunny visitor passed on before him to the better life. Sir Joshua had many girl and boy friends, but perhaps he was most fond of the sweet-faced Penelope Boothby, the only child of Sir Brooke Boothby. He was never too busy to grant admittance to the tiny knock of little Penelope, who often would be taken by her faithful nurse to Sir Joshua's studio, and left there for hours to beguile her 'own ownest friend' by her sweet ways and pretty turns of speech. The little one was always ready to pose for him, whenever he wished to take her picture. His favourite way of portraying her was as she looked when she was 'dressed up' in a fine old cap of his grandmother Reynolds, from which her baby face beamed out upon him like a ray from heaven."

In July, Sir Joshua received the honorary degree of D.C.L. from the University of Oxford. While at Oxford, he visited Blenheim Palace and Nuneham; and paid the Burkes a visit, on his way to and from Oxford, at Gregories.

The largest specimen of Sir Joshua's painting in the National Gallery is that group of three sisters decorating a figure of Hymen. They are the three daughters of Sir William Montgomery: who became Lady Townshend, Mrs Gardner (mother of Lord Blessington, by whom the picture was presented to the Gallery), and Mrs Beresford. Although this painting is a fine work, the attitudes of the three young ladies are somewhat too artificial; and it is not to be compared with that other group of sisters —the three beautiful Waldegraves, seated round a table, each occupied with some tranquil occupation. Another fine group is Reynolds' portrait of Lady Cockburn with

her children—a superb piece of glowing colour. So highly did Sir Joshua esteem this picture, that he painted his name on the skirt of the sitter's dress. This, and the great portrait of Mrs Siddons as the Tragic Music, are the only two occasions on which the President signed his name on any of his mature works. It is much to be regretted that Lady Cockburn's portrait is no longer in the National Collection, where, for a short time, it found a temporary home, as, owing to some flaw in the testator's will, this painting had to be given up to the family, and was then sold, and is now in the possession of the African millionaire, Mr Beit. Never was a work of Sir Joshua's painted with such splendour of colour as this group of the beautiful mother, with her children clinging around her, like those in an allegory of Charity. Sir Joshua must have felt, when working at this masterpiece, that he was equalling Rubens. He has introduced in the background the famous macaw, which appears in some of his portraits, and accentuates the glow of the surroundings. All this splendour of coloration is, of course, lacking in the engravings of Lady Cockburn and her children. A well-known stipple engraving of it, called *Cornelia and her Children*, was made from it by Wilkin in 1791. The date which Reynolds painted on the robe in the picture is 1775, but it was finished before that year, as it was in the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1774.

At that time, as of late years, there was a wish in artistic circles to render the interior of St Paul's Cathedral less lugubrious. The scheme was debated by the President of the Royal Academy in the days of George III. as it was under Victoria, and, as in the case of most matters ecclesiastical, the scheme for decorating the Cathedral led to much wrangling and ill-feeling.

During the summer of 1773, Reynolds brought forward a scheme to introduce pictures of a sacred kind into

Hanfstängl photo]] [*Alfred Beit, Esq.*

LADY COCKBURN AND HER CHILDREN

the interior of St Paul's. Dr Newton, Bishop of Bristol, who was at that time also Dean of St Paul's, fully approved of the suggestion. The King was approached, and gave his consent, as also did the Archbishop of York, with all the other persons connected with the Cathedral; but there was an exception, and this was a Dr Terrick, a bigoted low Churchman. "Whilst I live," writes Dr Terrick, "and have the power, I will never suffer the doors of the Metropolitan Church to be opened for the introduction of Popery." All the Kings, Primates, and Archbishops, Deans and Archdeacons could not prevail against Dr Terrick; and St Paul's had to remain for another century in all its former dinginess. Towards the middle of last century wiser counsels prevailed; there was no longer a Terrick to protest against a revival of "Popery" in making the interior of the Cathedral a thing of beauty; and, thanks to the great artist, Watts, who came forward with noble generosity to decorate the building with some of his splendid works, the former dark and sombre walls of Wren's masterpiece now glow with colour. Watts was seconded by Sir William Richmond, with his brilliant mosaics.

All that came out of the attempt to improve the inside of St Paul's was Sir Joshua's great painting representing the Nativity—the original of which work perished in the fire at Belvoir Castle in 1816, with eighteen others of Reynolds' paintings. The design exists in the great painted window in the Ante-Chapel at New College, Oxford, below the figures of the Virtues.

Some of the most popular of the actresses of the day sat to the President during the year 1775: among them were Nancy Parsons, the delightful Mrs Abingdon, and another well-known and popular lady of the stage, Mrs Hartley—great in such parts as *Jane Shore*. Her beauty is said to have made up for her lack of dramatic talent,

One day, Sir Joshua, complimenting her on her looks, was answered, with delightful candour, "Nay, my face may be well enough for shape, but sure, 'tis as freckled as a toad's belly."

Sir Joshua's pocket-book for 1774 is missing; but one can follow him in the lives of his friends. Early that year he was much in Goldsmith's company; they dined often together at different taverns and coffee-houses, or at Goldy's rooms at Brick Court, in the Temple. It was on one of these occasions at the St James' Coffee-House that the diners wrote verses on one another. Garrick struck off the well-known epitaph on Goldsmith, more quoted than any he ever wrote, as follows:—"Here lies Nolly Goldsmith, for shortness called 'Noll,' who wrote like an angel, but talked like poor Poll." A few evenings after this dinner, Goldsmith produced his famous lines on his friends, which he called "Retaliation for the epitaphs of the former meeting." Goldsmith's lines on Reynolds need not be fully quoted, they are too well known; but in saying that Reynolds "has not left a wiser or better behind," we have, as Leslie truly says, "the best epitome of Sir Joshua's character."

Poor Goldy's days were numbered; on the 4th April the poor, frail, little case which contained so great a spirit, so pure and brilliant a mind, ceased to suffer, and that kindest of hearts lay still in death, in the dingy bedroom in the Temple. When Reynolds heard that Goldsmith was dead he laid his brushes down, and ceased to work during that sad day, an extraordinary circumstance for one, as he himself wrote, "who passed no day without a line." Reynolds was one of Goldsmith's executors. Five days after he died, Goldsmith was buried close by the Temple Church; and Reynolds was the poorer for the remainder of his life, for he had lost a friend dearer to him than the whole crowd of peers and great ladies.

Hanfstängl photo] [*Windsor Castle*

PRINCESS SOPHIA MATILDA OF GLOUCESTER

To the Exhibition of that year Sir Joshua sent thirteen works; among the most remarkable of these was the great group, already referred to, of the Montgomery sisters, the one of Lady Cockburn and children, the superb portrait of Baretti (now at Holland House), and a noble full-length of the Duchess of Gloucester, and a delightful little portrait of her little daughter, Sophia Matilda, rolling on the grass, with a little terrier dog in her dimpled arms, which is one of the most precious possessions of the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle.

It was in the course of that summer that Hannah More, already celebrated for her great literary ability, was introduced to Reynolds; and it was in the President's drawing-room that she made Dr Johnson's acquaintance. Luckily the great man was in one of his most cordial moods. With Sir Joshua's macaw seated on his shoulder, the Doctor delighted the young authoress by quoting from one of her poems. At Sir Joshua's Hannah More also met Edmund Burke and Baretti. All appear to have lavished their compliments on the happy young authoress; and she could find no words to express her delight with Sir Joshua, his friends, his sister, and his two nieces.

It was in the month of June 1774, that the beautiful Georgiana Spencer married the Duke of Devonshire. She had been painted in her childhood by Sir Joshua, in a group in which she stands by the side of her mother, Lady Spencer. This group is at Althorp, Georgiana's old home. There is a life-size sketch in oils of little Georgiana Spencer, a study for the Althorp painting, in the National Portrait Gallery; and I know of two others, one at Castle Howard, and another belonging to Mr Claude Ponsonby.

From the year in which Georgiana Spencer became Duchess of Devonshire, till her early death in 1803, she was the best-known and most popular leader of society,

the greatest of the *grandes dames.* Her charm and fascination carried all before it, and wheresoever she went she brought cheerfulness and brightness in her train. She combined beauty of mind and person; but her greatest gift was her generous and noble nature. Horace Walpole writes of her in 1774, as "a lovely girl, natural and full of grace," and in the following year, "her youth, figure, glowing good nature, sense, lively modesty, and modest familiarity, make her a phenomenon." No one was more adored by her friends and children; and one does not wonder at this affection for one whose nature was so unselfish and so steeped in goodness of mind and heart.

Georgiana Devonshire sat often to Sir Joshua, as well as to Gainsborough. The former succeeded better in rendering the bright charm of his sitter than did Gainsborough, who, on one occasion, feeling that he could not succeed with his sitter, dashed his pencil across the canvas, with an impatient cry, "Your grace is too hard for me." I believe the most satisfactory portrait of the beautiful Duchess is that full-length by Sir Joshua at Althorp, painted, in the heyday of her beauty, in a dress of cream coloured satin and gold; her hair, which is brushed up from her brow, crowned with red and white ostrich plumes; she leans her right arm on a balustrade, and seems in the act of descending the stairs of a garden, the dappled shade playing around and about her. In later years she sat again to Reynolds; on this occasion with her eldest daughter, little Georgiana Cavendish, seated on her knee. Mother and child are playing at a game in which, at a certain stage, the mother calls out, *à propos* of birds, "and they all flew away," lifting up her hands, and the child crows with delight. That group of the Duchess and her eldest girl is at Chatsworth. In it Sir Joshua has painted Georgiana Devonshire in profile;

Hanfstängl photo] [*Chatsworth*

GEORGIANA, COUNTESS SPENCER, AND HER DAUGHTER, AFTERWARDS DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE

Hanfstängl photo] [*Chatsworth*

THE DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE AND HER CHILD GEORGIANA, AFTERWARDS COUNTESS OF CARLISLE

her somewhat *retroussé* nose showing that her beauty was not of a classical order like that of the rival beauty, the Duchess of Rutland, whom Sir Joshua also often painted. Of all his mother's portraits, the sixth Duke of Devonshire said that the one he thought the most like her, by Reynolds, was an unfinished one which Lady Thomond, Reynolds' niece, gave to the Duke many years after her uncle's death. This is a life-size oil sketch, and used to hang in the Duke's bedroom at Chiswick ; removed when that beautiful villa was allowed by the present Duke to become a private asylum ; it is now at Chatsworth.

During the summer of 1774 Gainsborough began to draw all the town to his studio in Pall Mall. He had exhibited up to that year, but, having quarrelled with the Royal Academy, he sent no more to the Exhibition. Sir Joshua, always ready to conciliate, called on Gainsborough at Schomberg House : but his visit was not returned ; and the two great artists scarcely met again, until they met in that famous parting, fourteen years later, when Reynolds, having been summoned by the dying Gainsborough, hurried to his bedside.

On one occasion, when looking at some of Reynolds' works in the Exhibition, Gainsborough admitted his genius by exclaiming, "D—n him, how various he is." "I cannot think how he produces his effects," Reynolds is reported to have said when looking at some of Gainsborough's paintings. Both those great masters thus expressed their admiration of one another. Leslie writes that, although it is uncommon to find a faded or cracked canvas of Gainsborough, and as rare to find a Reynolds that has not suffered by the loss of colour, or its surface unimpaired from the running of its varnishes and waxes, had Reynolds abstained from the use of his noxious vehicles and varnishes, his paintings would have come down to us with all the unimpaired splendour of those

of Gainsborough, who never appears to have been led into those pernicious practices in order to give a temporary brilliancy to his canvas. Sir Joshua has recorded some account of his experiments in the method he employed in the preparation of his vehicles, his resins, turpentines and waxes, with which, alas! he covered his works.

The sixth Discourse which Reynolds read at the close of that year was on "Pictorial imitation, the following of other masters, and the advantage to be drawn from the study of their works." In this paper Sir Joshua urges his pupils to imitate the great masters with as great a zest as they would follow those of nature itself.

Hanfstängl photo] [*Glasgow Gallery*

ELIZABETH ANN LINLEY

CHAPTER V

YEAR BY YEAR

1775–1780

THIS year, 1775, is memorable as being that in which the American colonies asserted their independence, and which added the name of many born Englishmen to history and to the roll of fame. The London world of fashion little cared about a campaign on the other side of the Atlantic, which was to prove so disastrous to the English arms, and danced, gambled and drank as was its wont. Horace Walpole, writing in the month of March 1775, says, "the vivacity of the young Queen of France has reached hither. Our young ladies are covered with more plumes than any native who has no other covering. The first people of fashion are going to act plays, in which cavaliers, singers, dancers, figurantes, might all walk in a coronation. The summer is to open with a masquerade on the Thames. I am glad the American enthusiasts are so far off; I don't think we should be a match for them." It was the lively Duchess Georgiana who had set the fashion of ladies wearing these ostrich plumes on their heads, of which Horace writes, and in which she was painted by Reynolds.

Another beauty sat to the President during that season —this was Eliza Ann Linley, the beautiful singer of Bath, whom Reynolds appropriately painted as St Cecilia— playing on the organ, accompanied by a choir of child angels. Her husband, the wittiest of the wits, the most

eloquent of orators, and the most brilliant of comedy writers, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, whose farce of "The Rivals" had appeared on the stage that summer, and had taken the town by storm, was also among Sir Joshua's sitters.

Among family portraits of the Howards of Carlisle at Castle Howard, is a noble full-length of a handsome coffee-coloured native of Otaheite, wearing a turban and a toga-like cloak—or burnous; this is Omiah, who had been brought to England by Furneaux in his vessel the "Adventure," from Otaheite, during the course of Captain Cook's second voyage round the globe. The good-looking islander was as much lionised that summer as was the Shah of Persia a century later.

In the Exhibition of 1775 Sir Joshua had twelve portraits; the most beautiful that one of Mrs Sheridan as St Cecilia; "most simple and beautiful," is Walpole's criticism on it. There too was a fine portrait of the Primate of Ireland, Dr Robinson; much admired, too, by Walpole, who considered it the finest work that Reynolds had accomplished. One of Sir Joshua's delightful child-portraits was also shown by him that year, the one of little Miss Bowles, now at Hertford House. The pretty chubby child is hugging a pet spaniel to her breast. *A propos* of this portrait, it appears that the little girl's parents wished her to sit to Romney, and consulting Sir George Beaumont, who was an artist as well as a connoisseur, regarding this artist, Beaumont advised that Reynolds, and not Romney, should paint the child; they objected on the ground that the President's paintings were apt to fade. "Never mind," said Sir George, "take the chance, even a faded picture from Reynolds will be the finest thing you can have." So the little girl was taken to Sir Joshua's house, and sat by him at dinner. He was so charmed with his little guest, and she with

THE MOST REV.D RICH.D ROBINSON D.D ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH PRIMATE
AND METROPOLITAN OF ALL IRELAND.
Engraved from an Original Painting of Sir Joshua Reynolds in the possession
of Mr.s Montague to whom this Plate is Inscribed by her Most and obedient Humble Servant
John Raphael Smith

[*Armagh Palace*

THE ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH

(*From the mezzotint by Smith*)

him, that he commenced her likeness at once, and painted one of his finest pictures, which is, happily, as fresh to-day as it was more than a century ago. Leslie calls this painting of little Miss Bowles "a matchless work, that would have immortalised him (Reynolds) had he never painted anything else." For this lovely painting Sir Joshua only asked fifty pounds—it would doubtless fetch a hundred times that sum were it to be sold again. Fortunately this is no longer a possibility.

James Northcote, Reynolds' pupil and his future biographer, left him that summer to set up his easel on his own account.

Another of Reynolds' beautiful sitters in that summer was the sister of Lady Sarah Bunbury—Emily, Duchess of Leinster, the mother of the heroic and ill-fated Edward FitzGerald. That portrait, which is of the size known as kit-cat (head and shoulders), is now at Carton, Maynooth, near Dublin. When Edmund Burke saw it he exclaimed, that it was impossible to add anything to it; however, the painter said he was not entirely satisfied with it, for it lacked, he said, "a sweetness of expression in the original" that he had not been able to render in his painting.

Johnson sat that summer for his portrait destined for the home of the Thrales at Streatham. The doctor said that although his friend Reynolds might paint himself showing his infirmities—Sir Joshua represented himself holding his trumpet to his ear—he objected to be painted holding a book close to his face, as in the portrait of Baretti. "Reynolds," he said, "may paint himself as deaf as he chooses, but I will not be blinking Sam." When in 1816 these portraits of Thrales' friends by Sir Joshua were sold and scattered, Sir Joshua's portrait of himself fetched £125, and that of Johnson £328; it is now in the National Gallery—perhaps, if not

the most pleasing, by far the most characteristic likeness of the great man. Sir Joshua did not complete the Streatham portraits till 1780. Of them there were a dozen; it was a misfortune that they were dispersed.

Sir Joshua's pocket-book for the year 1776 is lost. In the early part of that year we hear of the President's doings from Hannah More's letters; she often met him at the house of the Garricks, in the Adelphi and at their villa on the Thames. It was the time when the great actor was quitting the stage. Reynolds had recently painted Garrick's portrait for the Thrales; it is the one in which he sits facing the spectators, with a smile lighting up his wonderfully mobile face, his hands placed before him, with the thumbs touching; on the table on which he rests there is a paper with the word "Prologue" written on it. This portrait belongs to Lord Lansdowne, and is at Bowood. The great actor, when he sat to Reynolds for the portrait, was sixty years old; he had been for several years a martyr to gout and other fleshly ills, and was not far from the close of his great artistic career. He lives on in this portrait, which from contemporary notices appears to have been one of the best likenesses of our greatest tragedian as well as comedian.

Hannah More also paid visits to Reynolds at his villa at Richmond during the spring and summer of that year. Besides the Garricks she met the Gibbons there. "We had a great deal of laugh," Hannah writes, "as there were so many leaders among the patriots, and a great deal of attacking and defending, with much wit and good humour."

Among eleven paintings exhibited that year by the President, the finest was the full length of the Duchess of Devonshire, now at Althorp, already referred to. The portrait of Lord Temple was also a splendid performance, as was also Garrick's portrait for Streatham, and one of

Hanfstängl photo] [*Earl Spencer*

GEORGIANA, DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE

his best children's portraits, that of little Master Crewe, in a Henry VIII. costume, his little legs set wide apart; the whole pose of the boy's figure like a Holbein of a miniature King Hal. The little dog introduced in this painting is one of Sir Joshua's best, and its marvellous truthfulness to nature recalls some of the little dogs which Velazquez placed in his portraits of the Infantas.

Perhaps the year 1777 was that during which Reynolds was at his greatest. It was in that year that he painted three of his greatest triumphs, those of the Marlborough family at Blenheim; the two superb groups of the Dilettanti Club, and one of his finest child-portraits, namely, that of Lady Caroline Montagu Scott, the daughter of the Buccleuchs—in which she is standing on the snow, her hands in a big muff, and a little robin redbreast hopping at her side. Of this truly delightful child-portrait Thackeray has written the following appreciation in one of his "Roundabout Papers":—"When your spirits are low her bright eyes shine on you and cheer you. She never fails to soothe you with her speechless prattle. . . . You love her—she is alive with you." This portrait was engraved by Raphael Smith, under the title of *Winter*, in 1776; the mezzotint is one of the finest of the many fine ones by that Master of Mezzotint, and good impressions of it now fetch far more than the price of the original painting; thirty years ago over one hundred pounds was paid for a proof. This picture is at Dalkeith Palace.

During that winter Lady Elizabeth Hamilton sat to Sir Joshua. That portrait has mysteriously disappeared; it is supposed to have been destroyed by her husband, Lord Derby, from whom she was divorced. Lady Elizabeth's mother was the beautiful Elizabeth Gunning. There is a mezzotint of Lady Derby's portrait by Dickinson. We see that Sir Joshua introduced his famous

macaw into that portrait, as he had done in that of Lady Cockburn.

A very different sitter at that time was the member for Liskeard, Edward Gibbon, whose plump form occupied Sir Joshua's chair that winter. At this time Gibbon's luminous and voluminous "History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" was appearing. The painter and the historian saw much of each other in that winter in London; they met at the same houses, often dined together, and on one occasion were seen together at a masked ball.

Sheridan's brilliant comedies were being played in Drury Lane, and Reynolds was often a spectator.

In the month of May "The School for Scandal" took the town by storm; since the "Beggar's Opera" there had never been such a success on the English stage.

During that year that inspired but crazy painter-poet, Barry, living on oatmeal porridge, was working at his great paintings in the Society of Arts in John Street, Adelphi. It is to him that Leslie justly gives the credit of having originated and carried out by his own exertions the only great work of pictorial decoration that had yet been attempted in England. Barry was always at loggerheads with the Academy, and was especially bitter regarding Sir Joshua.

In the exhibition of 1777 four hundred and twenty-three paintings were shown. What a benefit it would be could the number yearly displayed at Burlington House be reduced to some such sensible figure.

Sir Joshua had thirteen works on the walls of the Academy; among them the portrait of Lady Derby, and the one of Lady Caroline Scott already noticed, and the two groups of the Dilettanti Club were among the thirteen pictures by the President; in them we see alive again the gay youths of that far-away day, the Dundas,

Gray photo] [*Oxford University Galleries*

DESIGN FOR THE WINDOW REPRESENTING "CHARITY," NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

the Mulgraves and Caermarthens, drinking toasts and discussing art and letters, or the latest archæological discovery in Italy or Greece.

In the middle of August Sir Joshua went to Blenheim. He had already painted the Duke and Duchess and two delightful groups of their children. The Duchess, who had been a Russell, had been painted by Reynolds at the same time as her sister-in-law, Lady Tavistock, and like the latter, in the costume she wore when one of the Queen's bridesmaids. The Marlboroughs were both young and handsome, and their children took after the parents. In the noble group he painted of these, Sir Joshua has done full justice to his subject. I think Leslie was right in calling this Marlborough group "the finest family picture ever painted by an Englishman."

It was in this prolific year of Reynolds' career that he designed the figures and groups for the great window in New College Chapel, Oxford. The window was enlarged. The design was to illustrate the Nativity: on either side of the Child Christ shepherds are introduced; below are the Four Cardinal Virtues, with those of Faith, Hope, and Charity; above all he placed an angel gazing at the symbol of the Trinity. Only a few of these designs painted by Reynolds have been preserved; these are two of the shepherds and the series of the Virtues.

The great central painting of the Nativity perished in the fire at Belvoir Castle. To judge by the window, this is no great loss. As a matter of fact, what was known by the name of "Sacred Art" was not congenial to Reynolds. The life-size, full-length figures representing Faith, Hope, and Charity, were exhibited in 1779. Those of the shepherds, in one of which Sir Joshua has introduced his likeness with Jervas, who painted the window from original oils, belonged to Lord Fitzwilliam. At the sale of Sir Joshua's pictures, in 1821, after Lady Thomond's

death, the ten paintings for the Oxford window fetched £7229; a larger sum than had been previously paid for any group of paintings in this country. For the Nativity the Duke of Rutland gave fifteen hundred guineas. Lord Normanton gave the same sum for the group of Charity, the best thing in the whole work, and also purchased Faith, Hope, and the four Cardinal Virtues, but they have suffered much in tone from a fire. These paintings were engraved in stipple by Earlom as a whole, and also separately by the Facius's—not very successfully. When it was first shown, this window caused much enthusiasm, but anything less suitable for a Gothic Chapel than this window, with its tall and modern looking ladies frisking as the Virtues, cannot be imagined. The dark brown and muddy colour permeating the entire window is also deplorable. The middle-aged may remember a somewhat similar window to this at Windsor, designed by Reynolds' successor in the Presidential Chair, Benjamin West, in the splendid Chapel of St George's, which it defaced for nearly a century. The great improvement effected by the removal of that window some quarter of a century ago, makes one wish that the same could be done in New College Chapel. With all our admiration for Reynolds' genius, one cannot but feel that in the Oxford window he made a great failure.

There is no pocket-book of Sir Joshua's existing for the year 1778, to help one with a list of his sitters, but Fanny Burney tells us of him in her letters, and writes pretty frequently about the President. Her famous novel, "Evelina," had appeared at the beginning of that year, and was the talk of the town; Sir Joshua had sat up all night reading it; all the wits and the great ladies were eager to meet her, and buzzed round the little lady like flies round a pot of jam. Such great men among the literate as Burke and Johnson, Gibbon and Sheridan,

[Nevenham

THE FIRST DUKE OF SUTHERLAND

(By special permission of Mr Aubrey Harcourt).

read the new novel with approval. When Reynolds met the lively little authoress, he appears to have been delighted with her; she returned his admiration, and writes to her friends of him as having a face and expression "gentle, unassuming, and engaging." She admired also Reynolds' nieces; Miss Burney thought "Miss Palmer had the better understanding, but Offie the most pleasing face."

In April Allan Ramsay, that most excellent Scottish portrait painter, returned from a voyage to Italy. The Scotch painter was a favourite with George III., but this did not make Reynolds any the less cordial to him, and he was always on the most friendly terms with Ramsay, and he appears to have liked him better than any other of his fellows of the brush. Ramsay's friendship was worth cultivating; although irritable by nature, he had that rare gift of mortals, charm, and to those on whom he bestowed his friendship his loyalty was assured. Of Allan Ramsay Sir Joshua used to say that he was "the most sensible among all the painters of his time." Boswell, writing of a dinner at which he met him during that month of April in Leicester Fields, "when we went to the drawing-room there was a rich assemblage, for it included, besides Boswell's host, Garrick, Sir William Chambers, Dr Percy of "The Reliques," the Burneys, father and daughter, Harris of Salisbury, the famous grammarian, and, towering over them all, Samuel Johnson."

During the summer and autumn of that year Reynolds paid some visits with Garrick and others of his friends to the militia camps at Winchester, Salisbury, Coxheath in Kent, and Warley Common in Essex, where camps of the militia had been formed to meet the anticipated invasion from France. That country had entered into a treaty of commerce with the revolted Americans, and a descent of the French fleet was expected on our southern coasts.

"Camps everywhere," wrote Horace Walpole, "and the ladies in the uniforms of their husbands." One of these, Lady Worsley, Sir Joshua painted in the uniform of her husband, of the Hants Militia.

In an action with the French fleet off Ushant, Keppel's signal to attack was ignored by Sir Hugh Palliser, with the result that the French ships got off in the night. Keppel attempted to screen Palliser, but a huge rumpus was started in London, and in the meanest way Palliser accused Keppel of misconduct and neglect of his duty as a seaman; this affair ended in Keppel's complete rehabilitation and in Palliser's and his partisans' collapse; but this belongs to the following year.

At the close of 1778, Sir Joshua gave to the public his "Seven Discourses." The book he dedicated to the King.

Johnson had again sat twice to Reynolds for his likeness during that year. Writing to Mrs Thrale on the 31st October, Johnson says, "Sir Joshua has finished my picture, and it seems to please everybody; but I shall wait to see how it pleases you."

Two beautiful ladies' portraits by Reynolds belong to this year: that of Lady Beaumont, wife of the artistic baronet, and that of Mrs Payne Gallwey, carrying her little boy "pick-a-pack." It is a gem of a picture.

Till 1778, Reynolds had received the sum from his sitter of 150 guineas for a full-length, 70 for a half-length, and 60 for a three-quarters, and 30 for the head only. In future these sums were increased.

In the month of January 1779, Keppel's court-martial opened at Portsmouth. Although Reynolds' detractors have tried to make him out somewhat of a cold and selfish individual, he was a staunch friend to those whom he believed worthy his friendships, and Keppel was one of his oldest and dearest friends. It is not surprising how keenly Sir Joshua felt for his gallant friend while the latter's honour

Hanfstängl photo] [*National Gallery*

ANNE, COUNTESS OF ALBEMARLE

was in jeopardy. That this noble seaman should be under the shadow of the slanders cast at him by Palliser must have been a bitter anxiety to Sir Joshua. Throughout the country there was a strong feeling for the maligned Admiral; but, as must always be the case, there were two sides in the matter—the Whig party, headed by Fox, Burke, and Sheridan, to whom Reynolds belonged, were on the side of Keppel, while the Tories and Court party supported Palliser and his partisans. Keppel had endeared himself to the people by his splendid courage, his great energy, and the care he took for the welfare of his sailors—by whom he was idolised, and much in the same way as Lord Roberts is known by the endearing epithet of "Bobs" throughout the army, so was Admiral Keppel throughout the Navy by that of "Little Keppel." When the verdict of Keppel's acquittal was announced, London was illuminated, the ships fired broadsides, "Little Keppel" was borne on the shoulders of the crowd, and Portsmouth blazed with bonfires. On the day after the acquittal, 12th February 1779, Sir Joshua writes as follows to his friend, "We talk of nothing but your heroic conduct in voluntarily submitting to suspicion against yourself, in order to screen Sir Hugh Palliser, and preserve unanimity in the navy, and the unkindness of Sir Hugh in publishing to the world what would otherwise have never been known;" and he continued, "whatever fatigues and expenses this business has occurred, is amply repaid you in additional honour and glory."

The Admiralty, which was then the most unpopular department in the State, bore the blame of Keppel's trial, and the Lords thereof suffered in the contents of their houses, if not in their persons. In Pall Mall, Palliser's house was gutted, the windows of Lords North and Bute were smashed; the Admiralty gates were torn off their hinges; and, it is a curious circumstance, that of those

who took part in these riots, Pitt and Samuel Rogers were among the window-breakers of the obnoxious anti-Keppelites. Keppel's head as a public-house sign had become as popular throughout England as that of the famous Marquis of Granby. There is no better test of popularity in this country than to have one's name bestowed on the sign of an inn or given to a boot. Reynolds painted his friend, Admiral Keppel, at least nine times. One of these—a noble half-length, is in the National Gallery—painted in this year of Keppel's triumphal acquittal. It was given by the Admiral to Dunning, the celebrated lawyer, afterwards the first Lord Ashburton, as an acknowledgment for defending him during the court-martial.

Admiral Lord Keppel died in the year 1786, his constitution shattered by the hardships he had undergone during his long and brilliant naval career. Another of his defenders at his trial was Erskine, who also received from Keppel his portrait by Reynolds. Edmund Burke had another. Burke's letter of thanks to the Admiral has a noble ring in it: "The town," he writes, "and my house there, will be the more pleasant to me for a piece of furniture I have had since I saw you, and which I owe to your goodness. I shall leave to my son, who is of a frame of mind to which that kind of honour appeals, the satisfaction of knowing that his father was distinguished by the partiality of one of those who are the marked men of all story, by bearing the glory and reproach of the time they live in, and whose services and merits, by being above recompense, are delivered over to ingratitude. Whenever he sees the picture, he will remember what Englishmen, and what English seamen were, in the days when name of nation, and when eminence and superiority in that profession were one and the same thing." This portrait is now at Milton, Lord Fitzwilliam's.

[Hanfstängl photo] [National Gallery

ADMIRAL KEPPEL

Many years after, Burke, who had lost the son he idolised, to whom he refers in the above letter to Keppel, writing to the Duke of Bedford, the Admiral's nephew, says, looking over his pictures at Beaconsfield, that the portrait of Lord Keppel "was painted by an artist worthy of the subject—the excellent friend of that excellent man from their earliest youth, and a common friend of us both, with whom we lived for many years without a moment of coldness, of peevishness, of jealousy, or of jar, to the day of our final separation." What a tribute these words of Edmund Burke's are both to Keppel and to Reynolds. They recall the touching lines on friendship from the pen of another illustrious friend of Sir Joshua: "Esteem of great powers," writes Johnson, "or amicable qualities newly discovered, may embroider a day or a week, but a friendship of twenty years is interwoven with the texture of life. A friend may be often found and lost, but an old friend can never be found, and nature has provided that he cannot easily be lost."

Fanny Burney was often at Sir Joshua's house that year. She called him the "Knight of Plympton," and she records long conversations with the knight in his dining-room, but Fanny's way was to be engrossed with herself and her remarks; it is all Fanny, and Sir Joshua only appears in the character of the chorus.

Early in that year the "gaiety of nations" (to use Johnson's expression) "was eclipsed" by the death of David Garrick. Reynolds attended the great actor's funeral in the Abbey. The friendship of Reynolds with Garrick lasted for a quarter of a century. How much poorer must life have been to one who had known so intimately and so well the great actor so long a time. Reynolds had written for private circulation two Dialogues, in a Johnsonian style, of which Garrick was the subject. These dialogues pretended to give Johnson's opinion on

the great actor. Reynolds had on some occasion said that Johnson considered Garrick as his personal property; he could, he said, never allow anyone to praise or blame him but himself. The dialogues are supposed to report the conversation at a dinner at which Reynolds is the host, Gibbon and Johnson being the guests. Johnson's manner of conversation is well mimicked, and these discourses are worth reading by all who love the memory of the "Ursa Major" of English Literature, and they prove that Reynolds was not wanting in wit and humour.

In later years, Hannah More, on reading those dialogues, writes to Reynolds' niece, Lady Thomond—"To see men whom I so highly loved and honoured brought, as it were, before my eyes in so pointed and striking a manner, was indeed unspeakable pleasure. Dear Sir Joshua, even with his immortal pencil, never drew more interesting, more resembling, portraits. I hear them all speak. I see every action, every gesture which accompanied every word. I hear the deep-toned and indignant accents of our friend Johnson; I hear the affected periods of Gibbon; the natural, the easy, the friendly, the elegant language, the polished sarcasm, softened into the sweet temper, of Sir Joshua."

To that year's Exhibition Reynolds sent two superb full-length ladies' portraits—Viscountess Crosbie, and Lady Louisa Manners. Nothing can be imagined more animated than the whole attitude of the former portrait. Lady Crosbie appears literally to be scudding across the landscape, full of the joy and zest of life at its best and fullest. This painting is now the property of Sir Charles Tennant. There is a fine mezzotint of it by W. Dickinson. The other lady's portrait—of the daughter of the Duke of Rutland—escaped the fiery fate which befell so many of Sir Joshua's works in the fire at Belvoir Castle, and is now in the possession of Lord Iveagh. "I have

been," writes Sir Joshua, "as busy this summer, in my little way, as the rest of the world have been in preparing against the invasion. From the emptiness of the town I have been able to do more work than I think I ever did in any summer before. My mind has been so much occupied with my business that I have escaped feeling those terrors that seem to have possessed all the rest of mankind. It is to be hoped that it is now all over, at least for this year."

Another of his delightful children's pictures was painted that year, namely, that of the little girl standing with folded hands on the top of a hill, and called in the engraving *Collina.* It represents the little Lady Gertrude Fitzpatrick, the daughter of Lord Upper Ossory. A contrast to the portrait of little Lady Gertrude is that of old Lady Bute, painted about this time, a life-like portrait of a somewhat dowdy old lady, "taking an airing," with a garden umbrella in her hand.

In the following year, 1780, the Annual Exhibition of the Royal Academy's pictures was first held in the new Gallery in Somerset House, Reynolds had helped to decorate the Gallery by a painting representing *Theory,* an angelic figure seated on a cloud. This painting is now in the Diploma Gallery at Burlington House.

CHAPTER VI

YEAR BY YEAR

1780–1782

IN the month of January of this year Sir Joshua paid a long visit to the Duke of Rutland. At Belvoir Castle he painted the portrait of its beautiful châtelaine, Lady Mary Somerset, daughter of Charles Noel, fourth Duke of Beaufort, who had married the Duke of Rutland in 1775, and who lived into the reign of William IV. This Duchess was of a more regular type of beauty than Georgiana of Devonshire, but lacking, I imagine, the gracious charm of the latter. Her husband had succeeded to the dukedom the year before she sat to Sir Joshua. He was the son of the famous Lord Granby, whose portrait, in uniform and cuirass, standing bareheaded and wigless by the side of his charger, is one of Sir Joshua's finest military portraits. Later on the President painted one of his groups of children, as only he could do, of the little Lord Granby and his sister, Elizabeth Manners, children of the Duke and Duchess. This beautiful work providentially was saved from the fire at Belvoir in 1816, and is one of the most treasured possessions in the Castle. I know of no engraving of it. Although the full length portrait of the Duchess was burnt, a bust-portrait similar to the full-length exists at Latimer, Lord Chesham's place; one can judge by that one what a superb work was lost when the full length perished. The full length portrait

Walker & Cockerell photo] [*National Portrait Gallery*

JOHN MANNERS, MARQUIS OF GRANBY

[*Lord Chesham, Latimer*

THE MARCHIONESS OF NORTHAMPTON

(*By special permission of the owner*)

[*Lord Chesham, Latimer*

LADY BETTY COMPTON

(*By special permission of the owner*)

[*Lord Chesham, Latimer*

THE DUCHESS OF RUTLAND

(*By special permission of the owner*)

was engraved in 1780 by Valentine Green—a splendid work.

The Royal Academy Dinner of that year had increased from sixty to ninety guests, and the Exhibition was opened in its new Gallery with a great flourish of trumpets—"eminently splendid," writes Samuel Johnson of it. Twice as much entrance money was taken at the doors as at any former Exhibition, and the notices in the newspapers on the Exhibition were in a proportional scale. Among some of the most notable pictures were some landscapes by Gainsborough, highly commended by Horace Walpole. Reynolds sent his portrait of Gibbon, and that delightful full-length of little Prince William of Gloucester, in a plum-coloured cavalier costume, which hangs in the oriel window of the hall at Trinity College, Cambridge, where it makes a pleasing contrast to the solemn portraits of dons and church dignitaries around it.

In 1780 Horace Walpole commissioned Reynolds to paint his three beautiful Waldegrave great-nieces, the daughters of the Duchess of Gloucester, who was a Walpole by birth.

Reynolds had previously painted one of these, Lady Laura, when a little child in her mother's arms. That beautiful work is now at Chantilly. The two other sisters were Horatia and Maria. Sir Joshua represents these three lovely girls seated at a little circular work table, at which they are engaged in work, one winds the silk, while another stitches, Lady Maria bends her graceful head, seen in three-quarters, over a "tambour" frame. When they sat to Reynolds, all these sisters had been crossed in love, but they were destined later on to find husbands; Lady Laura married her cousin, Lord Waldegrave; Lady Maria became the wife of the Duke of Grafton, and Lady Horatia married Lord Hugh Seymour.

"Sir Joshua" writes Horace Walpole, *à propos* of this painting, "began a charming picture of my three fair nieces, embroidering and winding silk. I rather wished to have them drawn like the Graces adorning a bust of the Duchess as the Magna Mater." Luckily the great uncle's wishes were not carried out, for had they been we should have had a repetition of the group of the Montgomery sisters, which, although beautiful, cannot be compared with that of the Waldegraves. To those who can remember that painting when it hung at the end of the Gallery at Strawberry Hill, in the same place where Horace Walpole had placed it, it was a vision that could never be forgotten, the wonderful likeness of those beautiful sisters was almost startling in its vividness.

After the death of Frances, Lady Waldegrave, this picture was sold, and it now belongs to Mrs Thwaites, by whose kindness I am enabled to give a photograph, republished in this volume, of that splendid work. Could Horace have known what a price this picture, for which he grumbled at having to pay £800, would fetch, he might well be astounded. Lord Carlingford —Lady Waldegrave's widower—is supposed to have been paid some £20,000 for it. Horace Walpole accuses Sir Joshua of becoming "avaricious in his old age," because he charged the owner of Strawberry Hill the really moderate price of eight hundred guineas for one of his masterpieces, and he continues to fume over the matter; "though the effect," he writes, "of the whole is charming, the details are slovenly, the faces only red and white; and his journeyman, as if to distinguish himself, has finished the lock and key of the table like a Dutch flower-painter." There seems to have been no pleasing Walpole with regard to this portrait of his nieces, for he complains both of a

Reynolds, pinx.

Swan Electric Engraving Co.

The Ladies Waldegrave.

From the picture in the possession of Mrs Thwaites.

sketchiness and over-finish of its painting, which, whatever he may have thought himself about it, was worth all his villa and its contents put together. Valentine Green has left a splendid mezzotint of the Waldegrave sisters: it is one of those mezzotints of which the print in proof and perfect condition fetches now as much as the painting itself cost Horace Walpole. Leslie believes that Walpole only paid Reynolds about half of the price he said the picture cost him; however, there is Walpole's own statement that he paid Reynolds eight hundred guineas.

During all that spring and summer an immense number of sitters flocked to Reynolds' studio—great ladies and statesmen, soldiers and seamen, actresses and children. In the month of June he finds time, however, to pay a visit to Lord Darnley's fair old home at Cobham, near Rochester.

Sir Joshua was always good-natured and helpful to young artists. He would find some time every morning before he began his work, when he would give them advice, and allow them to enjoy his paintings, of which he had, with a large and rare collection of pictures and drawings by the old masters, a fine collection. He is reported to have said that he would give all he was worth to possess a fine picture by Titian, whose colouring he admired beyond that of any other painter. For all his scraping of Venetian pictures, one would have imagined that Reynolds could not discover the secret of the art which is unrealisable as perpetual motion or the philosopher's stone; for, writing to a young student who had gone to Rome, Sir Joshua says, "Above all things, paint from Nature, instead of drawing," and he tells him that it was the great French landscape painter, Vernet's practice, to take his palette and pencils to the water side. When in Rome Reynolds had watched the clever French artist at his

work, when he says, "he showed me his studies in colour which struck me very much for that truth which those works only have which are produced while the impression is warm from Nature." But Sir Joshua always advised his own pupils to study from the best masters. "You had better get a Vandyck to copy if you can," was his advice to young Stothard, one of the most gifted of English artists.

During the Lord George Gordon riots, that June of 1780, Reynolds appears to have carried on the even tenure of his life, as if no mobs were in the streets, or houses near his destroyed. Although Somerset House was among the public buildings marked for destruction, Sir Joshua went there on the very day that it was threatened; but however calmly Reynolds took the doings of that stormy week, the list of his sitters was much lessened, and many of the appointments of his sitters had to be cancelled. During that month of June Lord Richard Cavendish sat to Reynolds for the half-length portrait which is still at Devonshire House, and which Horace Walpole conceived to be the best of Reynolds' works. It is a speaking likeness of a plain-faced man, but full of life. It is one of those life-like portraits of Reynolds, which could be placed by the side of a Titian, a Vandyck, or a Velazquez of the first order, and not suffer by comparison. This portrait was engraved by Raphael Smith in 1781, in the year in which Lord Richard died. He had travelled in the East, and the strange mound-like erection in the background of the picture is supposed to be the Sphinx—introduced by the artist in allusion to what in those days was a very distant pilgrimage.

At the close of the summer Sir Joshua paid a visit to his friends and relatives in Devonshire. He stayed with the Parkers at Saltram, with the Eliots at Port Eliot, with the Edgcumbes at Mount Edgcumbe, and with his

relations at Plympton. At Saltram he saw again his portrait-group of the Parker children, in which the head of the boy, he wrote to a friend, he thought "the finest he had ever done."

After his return to London, in the month of October, Reynolds delivered a short address on the occasion of the opening of the new Academy schools, and told the students that he hoped they would prove themselves worthy of "the noble habitation," where they were now housed.

In December he delivered his tenth Discourse, the subject of which was Sculpture.

The New Year, 1781, found Sir Joshua with the Thrales at Streatham. His series of portraits was then completed and placed on the walls of his old friend's house. Early in that year his niece, "Offie" Palmer, married Richard Lovell Gwatkin, a Cornish squire; the marriage took place at Torrington. There is a charming letter of Sir Joshua's, written on this occasion to his favourite niece; it finishes thus:—"That you may be as happy as you both deserve is my wish, and you will be the happiest couple in England. So God bless you." It is difficult to believe that that man's nature was a cold and a selfish one, who wrote those lines. Sir Joshua's wishes, one is glad to know, were happily fulfilled. "Offie" lived happily with her husband, and died at the age of ninety: she was permitted to see her children's grand-children. In her old age she loved to recall her happy youth in her uncle's house in Leicester Fields. His memory was ever dear to her, as was also the recollection of the society in which she had been beloved.

In 1781, Reynolds had fourteen works in the Exhibition; among these was that little known group of the Rutland children, which has been previously referred to—the little Lord Granby with his sister, and some

dogs, both the children and animals admirable. It is one of the happiest of his groups of children. Another fine portrait of a child shown in that year by Reynolds was that of Master Bunbury—a truly wonderful personification of a small urchin sitting on a bank, with a look as mischievous as Puck himself; the little fellow looks as if he were saying "Pooh!" to the universe. "Charming," is Horace Walpole's encomium on little Bunbury's portrait; it is well deserved. The little fellow in red velvet jacket and brown breeches, looking so roguishly from out the frame, lived to succeed his uncle, Sir Thomas, as seventh Baronet. There is a fine engraving, by F. Haward, of little Bunbury, one of the most sought after by collectors of Reynolds' works.

One of Reynolds' best ideal pictures, that called *The Death of Dido*, now at Buckingham Palace, was among the exhibits of that year. Dido is represented lying on a couch placed on a funereal pile, a female attendant stoops over the prostrate form of her mistress, and above, an angel hovers half hidden in a cloud; in the distance the vessel, which conveys from the shore the unhappy Queen's faithless lover, is seen fading away. Stothard was in Sir Joshua's studio while he was engaged on painting this picture, and he told how Reynolds had got a pile of faggots built up, on which he had placed some drapery; a lay figure was stretched on the drapery dressed *à la* Dido. Although this painting attracted some attention among the crowd at Somerset House that summer, the group of the Waldegrave sisters took all eyes from it.

In July Sir Joshua paid a visit to the Low Countries, with his friend Metcalfe. They sailed from Margate, landed at Ostend, visited Ghent, Brussels, Mechlin, and Antwerp; and after having seen all the pictures in the Churches and picture galleries of Flanders, went on to

Hanfstängl photo] [*Buckingham Palace*

THE DEATH OF DIDO

Holland, where they saw the public and private galleries at the Hague, Leyden, Haarlem and Amsterdam. It must appear strange to us, who place Frans Hals among the greatest of portrait painters of any time or country, that although Reynolds saw some of his noble paintings at Haarlem, he should not have said aught in their praise.

Sir Joshua and his companion also visited Düsseldorf (then boasting a splendid gallery of arts), Aix-la-Chapelle, and Liège, returning home by Brussels and Ostend: they landed at Margate after an absence of two months. The entries during this tour in the Netherlands in Reynolds' diary are of the scantiest, but he published an account of his tour called "Journey to Flanders and Holland in the year 1781," which is full of interesting matters relating to the paintings he had seen in those countries; and also wrote at the close of those notes a "Character of Rubens," in which he sums up the great qualities of that great colourist, as follows:—"Those who cannot see the extraordinary merit of this great painter, either have a narrow conception of the variety of art, or are led away by the affectation of approving nothing but what comes from the Italian School."

Reynolds' notes on Flemish and Dutch painting were published at the same time as was the first edition of his Discourses, by Malone.

Early in the following year, 1782, Reynolds was again hard at work. Two celebrities, of very different kinds, were giving him sittings; one of these was *Perdita* Robinson, the Prince of Wales' discarded mistress; the other, the handsome and gallant young Colonel Tarleton. *Perdita* Robinson sat twice to Sir Joshua, and her pretty face was also introduced by him into some of his ideal works; but none of his portraits of her can compare with the superb life-size seated portrait in Hertford House. Young Colonel Tarleton had distinguished him-

self in the American war by his splendid dash and gallantry; with the strength of a young Hercules he combined the beauty of a Greek. He was beloved by his men, and Tarleton's Legion was long remembered in the South American States. He posed at the beginning of that year for his full-length portrait for his mother. Sir Joshua's portrait of Tarleton was a strikingly original work; he has in a most ingenious manner conquered the difficulty of what would have been stiff and wooden in effect, owing to the ungainly uniform he wears, had he placed his model differently, but Reynolds has avoided any stiffness by recalling that his model was wounded by a shot in the thigh, and by an inspiration of true genius, he has represented the young officer binding up his wounded limb, which he rests on a dismounted gun. The attitude is as fine as the pose of some Grecian warrior or athlete by Phidias or Myron. Young Tarleton is said to have been as vain as he was brave, and one can imagine that his vanity was not lessened by this portrait. It was formerly in Mr Wynn Ellis's collection, and was engraved in mezzotint in 1782 by J. R. Smith; the mezzotint is as fine as the portrait itself.

William Beckford, the author of "Vathek," that wonderful Oriental tale, was also sitting to Reynolds that winter; also the wisest-looking man of his generation, the Lord Chancellor Thurlow—he of the beetle brow and burly eyebrows.

The great potter, Wedgwood, was also sitting to our artist that year, and Edmund Burke and his son. Among the lady sitters in Leicester Fields that year was one of the toasts of the day, the beautiful Mrs Musters, and Mrs Baldwin, known as "The Fair Greek," the wife of the English Consul at Smyrna. This lady sat for her portrait in Smyrniote costume; her portrait, in full-length, was one of the sensations of that year's Exhibition, and

shared with that of young Tarleton the honours of the year.

In her diary, Fanny Burney gives us a glimpse of Sir Joshua that summer at his Richmond villa. Reynolds and his niece call for Mr Burney and Fanny and drive them down to Richmond; on arriving, after a pleasant drive, they walk on the Terrace, where they are joined by the Bishop of St Asaph, and Dick, Edmund Burke's son. Gibbon joins the party, and an unknown lady. Returning to Reynolds' villa they find dinner ready. Sir Joshua places Fanny between him and Edmund Burke, over whom Fanny waxes enthusiastic, for the statesman pays her many a compliment on her writings, and we know how Fanny loves praise. "No imagination," says Burke, "not even the imagination of Miss Burney could describe a character so extraordinary as that of Cardinal Ximenes; no pen—not even the pen of Miss Burney—could have described it accurately!" No wonder the authoress of "Evelina" is delighted with this tribute of admiration from the great Edmund's lips.

During that summer the beautiful Duchess of Rutland again sat to Reynolds.

In the month of November Sir Joshua had apparently made up the quarrel between himself and Gainsborough, for he promised to sit to him for his portrait, and it is much to be regretted that this portrait, if begun, was never finished, for Reynolds was suddenly attacked by paralysis. He appears, however, to have given his great rival one sitting before his illness. It was on the occasion of this alarming illness that Johnson wrote that memorable letter on the 14th of November from Brighton to his old friend, in which he says, "Your country has been in danger of losing one of its brightest ornaments, and I of losing one of my oldest and kindest friends." Reynolds was ordered to take the waters at Bath where he went in

the middle of November, and where he remained till early in December; on his return to town, writes Fanny Burney, "he looks vastly well, and as if he had never been ill."

It was at the close of the year 1782 that Reynolds saw much of the stately Mrs Siddons, then in her twenty-eighth year, not as yet at the pinnacle of her great renown. The great tragedienne was wont to consult with Reynolds on the subject of her stage costumes, and of the manner of wearing these, in such parts as Lady Macbeth, and other less well-known parts. Sir Joshua often dined with the Siddons.

In the middle of December Reynolds delivered his eleventh Discourse. Its subject was the definition of pictorial genius, which, according to him, "is the power of expressing what employs the pencil, as a whole."

CHAPTER VII.

YEAR BY YEAR

1783–1792

NO pocket-book of Reynolds' for the year 1783 has been found. It is a memorable year in his life, as being that in which he painted his greatest portrait, that of Sarah Siddons.

On that great work Reynolds appears to have been occupied most of the year; it was indeed not completed until two years later, as the date with the artist's name painted on the hem of Siddons' dress in the portrait proves. Had Reynolds never painted anything except this masterpiece, it would have placed him in the front rank of artists; for, whether we look on it as a portrait alone, or as an ideal creation of his brush, it stands on a level with the greatest of artistic creations. Even Michael Angelo's *Sibyls*, in the Sistine Chapel, are not more impressive than this likeness of the greatest of all actresses, seated for all time enthroned amidst the clouds as the embodiment of the Muse of Tragedy. Nothing that Sir Joshua had attempted in combining a portrait with a work of imagination can compare with this wonderful work, and in it the genius of the painter appears to greater advantage than in any other of his works; there is no exaggeration in calling *The Tragic Muse* sublime. Mrs Siddons described in after years to the authoress, Mrs Jameson, the way in which her portrait was commenced by Reynolds. Sir Joshua appears in the first

sitting to have himself put on a histrionic manner—taking the great actress by the hand he led her to the steps of the platform and said, "Ascend your undisputed throne," as he pointed to the famous arm-chair upon it; "bestow on me," he added, "some idea of the Tragic Muse." "I walked up the steps," said Mrs Siddons, and instantly seated myself in the attitude in which the 'Tragic Muse' now appears." When the picture was completed, Reynolds said that he could not resist the opportunity for going down to posterity on the edge of Mrs Siddons' garment; and he then inscribed his name with the date, 1784, on the painting of the dress, along the gilded edge of the upper drapery.

The first possessor of this noble painting was a Frenchman, Monsieur de Calonne, who gave Reynolds eight hundred guineas, the largest sum the President had ever received for a painting with so few figures; later it changed hands frequently; in 1795 it was in the possession of a Mr Smith of Norwich, afterwards it belonged to Mr G. Watson Taylor. Early last century it was bought by Lord Grosvenor for 1760 guineas, and has remained in that family since then. At Grosvenor House it hangs in the same room with another masterpiece by an English Master, Gainsborough's *Blue Boy*.

There is another version of *The Tragic Muse* in the Dulwich Gallery. This was sold by Reynolds to Mr Desenfans for seven hundred guineas, in 1790, and the date on the hem of her garment is 1789, from which it appears that he completed this five years after the Grosvenor house picture. Both of these may be regarded as the authentic work of the Master. There is a replica also of *The Tragic Muse* at Langley Park, near Stowe, which is said to have been given by Reynolds to Mr Harvey in exchange for a painting by Snyders of a Boar-Hunt, and another was in the

Hanfstängl photo] [*Dulwich Gallery*

MRS SIDDONS AS "THE TRAGIC MUSE"

possession of Mrs Combe in Edinburgh. I think there is no doubt that these replicas are by the hands of Reynolds' assistants.

This great conception is too well known to require describing. Seated on her throne the Muse of Tragedy has at her back two figures; one of these with a youthful face is emblematical of Remorse; the other symbolises Crime, and Reynolds has had the somewhat odd taste to figure his features in that unattractive character.

The Jewish type of the Kembles is as markedly shown in this portrait by Reynolds of Mrs Siddons as it is in the beautiful half-length seated portrait of her by Gainsborough, in the National Gallery.

The engraving of *The Tragic Muse* led to the rupture between Valentine Green and Sir Joshua, the only occasion on which the tranquil Reynolds lost his temper. From 1767 to 1783 Valentine Green engraved twenty of Sir Joshua's pictures, and but for the quarrel which arose from Valentine Green's annoyance at not being entrusted with the reproduction of *The Tragic Muse*, he would no doubt have transcribed many more of Sir Joshua's pictures. Green had seen *The Tragic Muse*, and had asked Reynolds to let him engrave it, and Sir Joshua said he should certainly be remembered. When Green subsequently learnt from Reynolds that "Mrs Siddons had recommended another artist," Green wrote an angry letter to Reynolds, intimating that he had reason to believe that Mrs Siddons had never done anything of the kind. To this letter Sir Joshua replied, 1 June 1783, resenting strongly Green's accusation, and saying, "That note, as I expected to be believed, I never dreamt of showing, and I now blush at being forced to send it in my own vindication." Mrs Siddons letter to Sir Joshua is in the possession of Sir Robert Edgcumbe, at Sandye Place, and is as follows:—

"Mrs Siddons compliments to Sir Joshua Reynolds, and thinks, with all submission to his better judgment, that the picture should be put into the hands of that person (whose name she cannot at this moment recollect) who has executed the print of the children, from a picture of Sir Joshua, in so masterly a manner."
May 7th, 1783."

The "print of the children" was the engraving by Francis Haward of the *Infant Academy*, which he had just then finished. So, abruptly and unfortunately, ended, in 1783, the transcription by Valentine Green of Sir Joshua's pictures.

At that year's Exhibition Reynolds had ten of his works, none of first class excellence; his portrait of Mrs Siddons was probably the cause of this, for to it he must have given much of his time.

During that summer Reynolds paid some visits; with his niece he went to Belvoir and Nuneham, and visited his friends and relations in Devonshire. And in the autumn he made another trip to the Low Countries, in hopes of enriching his collection of paintings by the dispersal of Church pictures, which, owing to the Emperor Joseph's reforms in his dominions, were being then thrown on the market.

In Reynolds' pocket-book for the year 1784 are entered the names of a large number of sitters, among whom figures the Duchess of Devonshire; this is the famous painting of Duchess Georgiana with her eldest daughter, also a Georgiana, who became in after life Countess of Carlisle. In the picture which Reynolds painted in July, mother and child are engaged in a game called "hot cockles," both with their arms raised in the air, the child is crowing with delight. It is at Chatsworth, and in splendid condition. There is a fine copy of it by Etty at Windsor Castle, more brilliant in colour than the original, although that is not wanting in brilliancy.

[*Lord Iveagh*

THE INFANT ACADEMY

(*From the engraving by Walker*)

All through the spring the Westminster Election was in full blast, Reynolds, always a good Whig, in the very middle of the election rows.

Dr Johnson, the sands of whose life were then rapidly running down, was able in spite of bodily weakness to attend the dinner of the Academy on the 28th of April. "Our company," he writes to Mrs Thrale, "was splendid. I showed myself again [it was the last time he attended] to the living world at the Exhibition." At the Exhibition Reynolds had sixteen exhibits; among these was the well-known half-length portrait of Charles James Fox, in blue coat and buff waistcoat, at Holland House; a delightful bust-portrait of Miss Kemble, afterwards Mrs Twiss; and crowning all, there was the great *Tragic Muse*.

During that summer it was painfully obvious to Dr Johnson's friends that his life was now but a matter of months. Reynolds, with the kind-heartedness which belonged to him, had with Boswell urged Lord Thurlow to get the royal bounty fund extended to the Doctor. The Chancellor, quite willing to be of service, asked the best way of helping the Doctor, and consulted Reynolds on the matter as being one of Johnson's greatest friends. When Johnson was told of this he fairly broke down, and wept with emotion. Reynolds suggested that Johnson should pass the coming winter in Italy, and his doctors approved of this. However, with the exception of a short journey to his native city of Lichfield, Johnson was destined never again to leave London; the end, long foreseen by his friends, overtook him on the 13th of December. Johnson made three requests as he lay dying to Sir Joshua: the first one was never to work on a Sunday; the second to read something out of the Bible whenever he had time to do so, and always on a Sunday; and the third to forgive him a debt of thirty pounds which he had borrowed from

Reynolds. One could not easily find two men so different as Reynolds and Johnson in most respects; but they possessed great and important qualities in common, and they resembled one another in their highmindedness and in the uprightness of their lives, and the goodness of their dispositions.

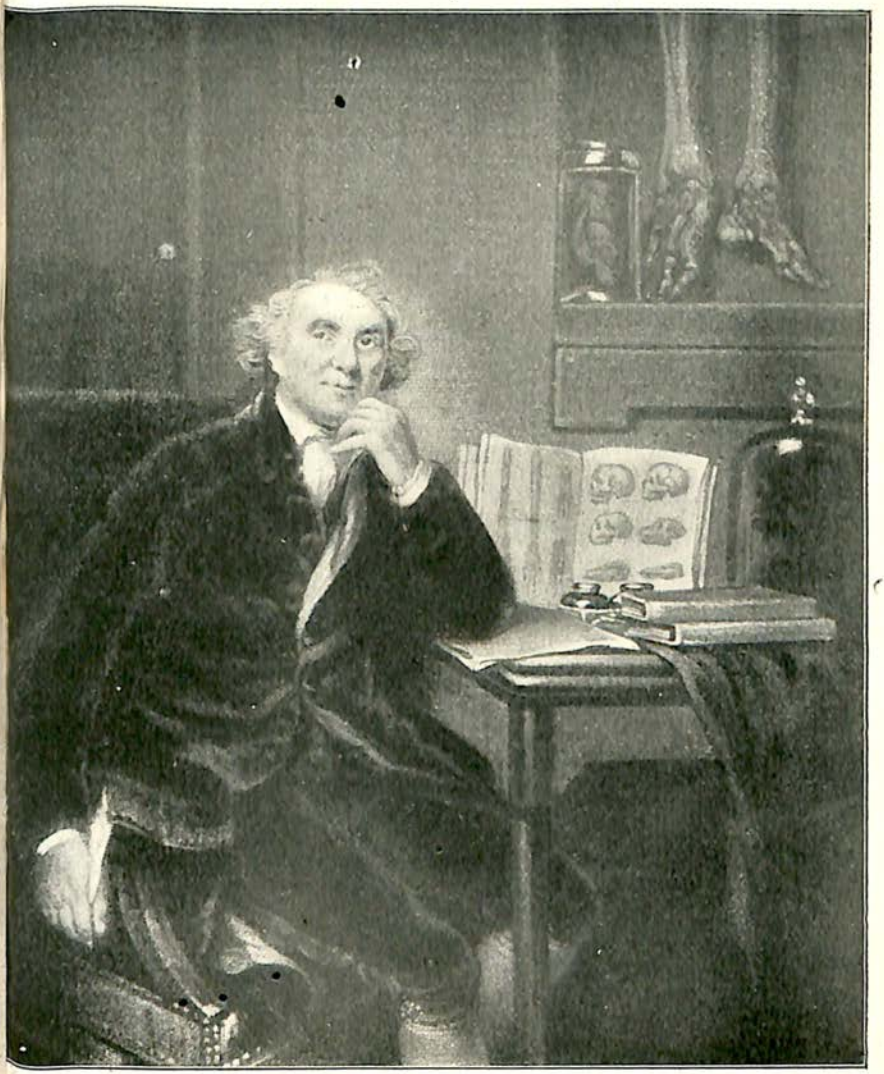
Allusion has already been made to the affection and regard in which Dr Johnson held Reynolds: what he said about the actor Foote is worth requoting:—"When Foote has told me something, I dismiss it from my mind like a passing shadow; when Reynolds tells me something I consider myself as possessing an idea the more."

Reynolds was one of Johnson's executors; he attended the funeral, and stood by Garrick's grave when Johnson's coffin was placed alongside of it.

In a memoir, written shortly after Johnson's death, Sir Joshua very aptly quotes Griffiths' eulogium on Wolsey: "Lofty and sour to them that loved him not; But to those men that sought him sweet as summer." In these lines Johnson's character is better told than in pages of the writings of those who knew him best.

At the close of the year, 1784, Sir Joshua delivered his twelfth Discourse. The artist's education was its subject.

On the death of Allan Ramsay that year, Sir Joshua was appointed to the vacant post of Painter to the King. A mere form, and an empty honour, for a man so great as Reynolds. Although now nominally painter to George III., Reynolds was only once employed by him to paint two portraits at the commencement of his reign. The fact was that the King could not endure Reynolds, and had the bad taste to say of his paintings, to his favourite Court painter, Beechey, that he thought them coarse and unfinished.



[*Royal College of Surgeons, London*

JOHN HUNTER, M.D

Hanfstängl photo] [*National Gallery*

THE SNAKE IN THE GRASS

OR, LOVE UNBINDING THE ZONE OF BEAUTY

There is no pocket-book for the following year, 1785. In that year's Exhibition he had sixteen works. Among these was a rather famous one of a nymph, holding her hand over her right eye, and called *The Snake in the Grass.* Of this painting there are several repetitions; one is in the the National Gallery, another belongs to Lord Rothschild, and a third is in the Soane Museum.

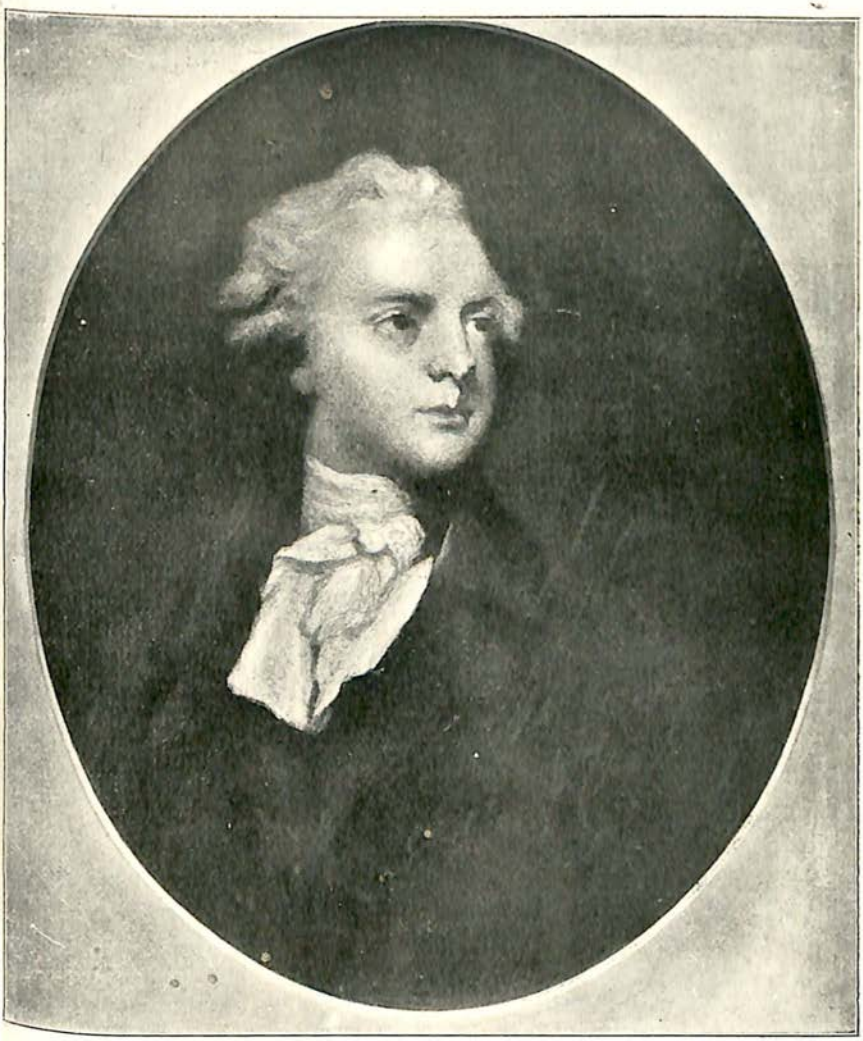
During the summer, Sir Joshua painted the great Scotch surgeon, John Hunter. This is the half-length seated portrait, in the hall of the College of Surgeons, in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The great anatomist looks upward in deep contemplation. In its way it is as fine a portrait as that of Sterne; as full of intellect, but an intellect of a different kind from that of Laurence Sterne. Hunter, known already throughout Europe as the greatest of comparative anatomists, was in his fiftieth year when he sat to Reynolds. This noble work has suffered from the gross negligence of the Society to which it belongs, and is a mere wreck of a painting; but the character of the great surgeon, his keen intellectual glance, is still visible in the blackened canvas. Hunter's portrait was engraved in line by William Sharp, in 1788. There is a fine copy of it, painted by Jackson, in the National Portrait Gallery, which gives a better idea of what the original was like before the College of Surgeons allowed it to crack and bloom into a general state of obscurity.

Another fine male portrait of that year was the likeness of old Joshua Sharpe, a well-known conveyancer. Boswell, too, sat for his plain face to Reynolds that summer. Bozzy's was not a face that even Sir Joshua could render interesting.

Philippe, Duke of Orleans, soon to be known as "Egalité," was in London that season, drinking, gambling, and racing, with his boon companion, the Prince of

Wales. Madame de Genlis accompanied him to England. The former sat to Reynolds, the latter to Romney. Sir Joshua painted the Bourbon prince full-length, in a brilliant hussar uniform; which was placed in Carlton House, where it was almost destroyed by a fire. In its ruined state it is still to be seen at Hampton Court. There was a fine mezzotint made after it by J. R. Smith. Sir Joshua said that no man he had ever painted stood so well for his portrait as Louis Philippe d'Orleans. The Duke sat below his own portrait at the Academy Dinner that year. Eight years after, and the guillotine cut short his profligate and less than useless existence. A more despicable character than that of Philippe d'Egalité is not to be found even among a family which furnished France with an Orleans Regent, and the throne of Spain with a series of drivelling despots.

The year 1786 was a full and busy one in Sir Joshua's career. "My uncle," writes Miss Palmer, in the month of January, "seems more bewitched than ever with his pallet and pencils. He is painting from morning till night, and the truth is, that every picture that he does seems better than the former. He is just going to begin a picture for the Empress of Russia, who has sent to desire he will paint her an historical one. The subject is left to his own choice, and at present he is undetermined what to choose." The commission from Catherine of Russia had reached Reynolds during the previous year. He at length thought out an allegorical subject for the *Semiramis of the North*, in which the infant Hercules, strangling a brace of serpents, appears surrounded by other mythological figures. On one side of the muscular infant prodigy appears Alcmena, who rushes to the rescue of the infant god, and is followed by a group of attendants; on the other side stands Amphitryon with a sword drawn, attended by servants who carry torches; over all hangs a



Mansell photo] [*National Gallery*

SIR ABRAHAM HUME, BART.

mystic twilight, what would now be called a "Götter-dämmerung." Another prominent figure in this extraordinary performance is the figure of the blind prophet Tiresias. Reynolds had poor Johnson in his mind when he painted that head. It must be confessed that this ambitious work is a great, indeed, a colossal failure, badly arranged, badly conceived, and, for the great Master, badly painted. This big canvas, when seen at the Winter Palace by the side of the Vandyck's, and Rubens's, makes one wish that Reynolds had sent one of his portraits instead of that absurd allegory, which does not do justice to the artist or his country. Horace Walpole had suggested to Reynolds to paint for the Empress a picture representing Peter the Great at Deptford, and, although one cannot think that this would have suited Sir Joshua's style, it was a far more appropriate subject than Reynolds' burlesque of mythology, and more adapted to be placed by the shores of the Neva. Reynolds painted a replica of the infant Hercules, without the surrounding figures: it belonged to Lord Northwick. The Russian allegory was engraved by C. H. Hodge in 1793.

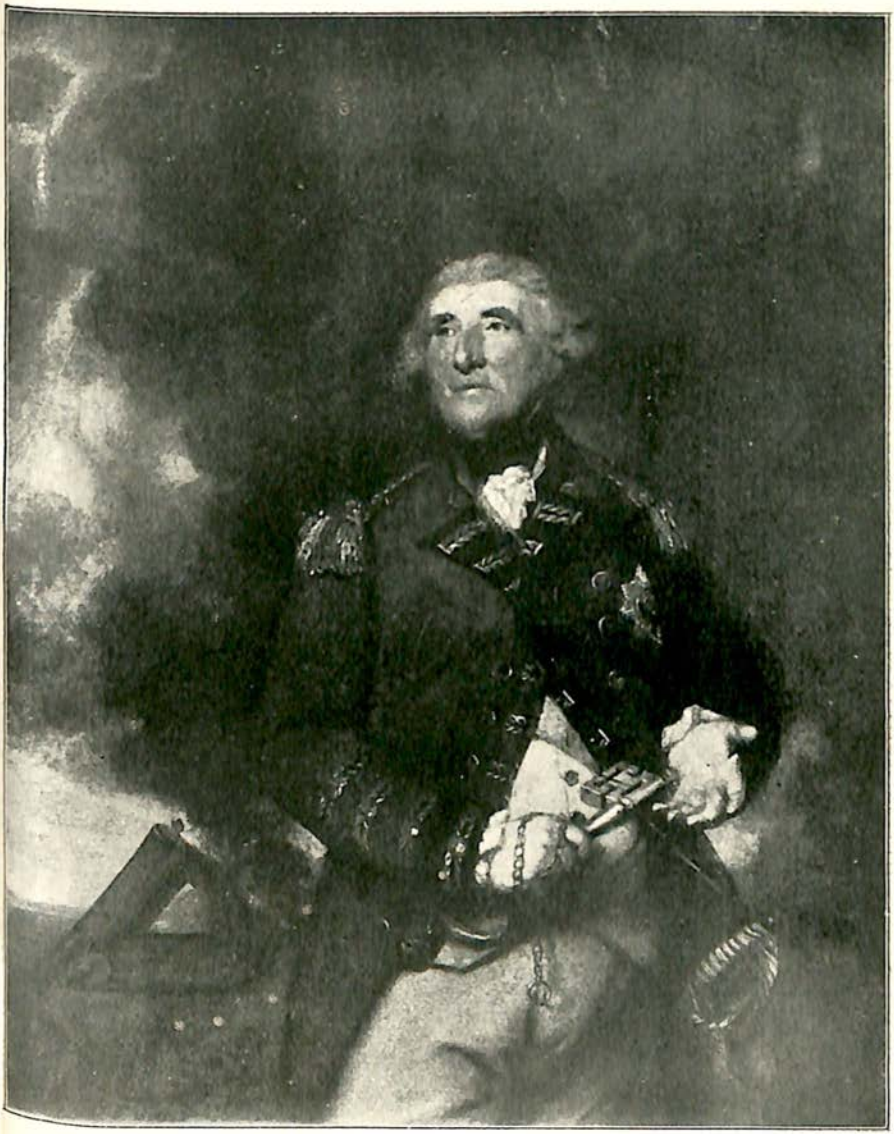
During the summer, Reynolds painted a delightful head of Lavinia, Lady Spencer, in a large straw hat, which throws a strong shadow on her winsome face. It is among many of Sir Joshua's family portraits of the Spencers at Althorp; with it is a companion portrait of Lady Spencer's sister, Anne Bingham. That summer, too, Sir Joshua painted his beautiful group of angels, which he called the *The Guardian Angel*, an angelic form stooping over the figure of a sleeping child. This painting was reproduced in mezzotint in 1786 by Hodge; the original belongs to the Duke of Leeds.

During that summer all the world of London was excited by the State Trial of Warren Hastings. While

the world of London was excited over this trial in Westminster Hall, Paris was even more agitated by the trial of the Cardinal de Rohan in the affair of the Queen's Diamond Necklace. Almost too hackneyed for quotation, Macaulay's wonderful word-painting of the great Englishman's trial, which occupied that summer in the hall of Rufus, recurs to our mind: "The spectacle," he writes, "had allured Reynolds from that easel which has preserved to us the thoughtful foreheads of so many writers and statesmen, and the sweet smiles of so many noble matrons."

In December, Reynolds delivered his thirteenth Discourse: its subject, that Art should be not merely slavish imitation of Nature, but imitation controlled by the imagination. The end and object of all art, Reynolds declared, "is to make an impression on the imagination and the feeling."

In the following year, 1787, Alderman Boydell engaged Reynolds to paint some large canvases for his Shakespeare Gallery—a project started by that most energetic Alderman and art dealer in the previous winter. Besides the President, Boydell gave commissions to Benjamin West, to Copley, and to Romney, amongst other artists. For this gallery, Reynolds painted the scene of the Witches, out of Macbeth: it occupied over eight feet in height by twelve in length, and, like his Russian painting of the infant Hercules, is not worthy the fame of the Master; but, in another Shakespeare subject, also commissioned by Boydell, Sir Joshua was far more successful, for his painting of *Puck* is in every way worthy his talent. This delightful little sprite is among his most delightful child subjects. It is still in splendid condition at Lord Leconfield's house at Petworth. Boydell paid Reynolds one thousand guineas for *Puck*. Another picture he painted for Boydell's gallery represents the death of



Mansell photo] [*National Gallery*

LORD HEATHFIELD WITH THE KEY OF GIBRALTAR

Cardinal Beaufort. It is perhaps the most unsuccessful of any of his imaginary works. This is in the Memorial Gallery at Stratford on Avon.

One of Reynolds' works in that year's Exhibition was destined to become one of his most widely known and popular paintings. I allude to that delightful group of what appears a bevy of angels' heads, in the National Gallery. They are all from one child's head, Frances Isabella, the daughter of Lord and Lady William Gordon. There is no modern painting in our National Gallery, I believe, more copied than is this delightful cluster of heads, or rather of one little Scotch girl's head. It was one of thirteen works exhibited that year by the President, in the Academy of 1788. There was also a beautiful group of a mother and children—Lady Smyth; and one of little Master Philip York—a robin redbreast is perched on his little dimpled hand, while a dog, one of Reynolds' best dogs, looks up at his little master's face with an appealing expression.

Mrs Fitzherbert, the Prince of Wales' wife, had sat to Reynolds during the previous year, and again in 1788; but her portraits were not exhibited.

At the end of the summer, Sir Joshua painted one of his most spirited half-length portraits—that of Lord Heathfield, fresh from his glorious defence of Gibraltar; a defence which had lasted four long years. All who have visited the National Gallery, must recall that portrait of the sturdy old hero, holding the great key of the fortress so lightly in his hand, with a look on his honest old face as if he were saying to himself, "I hold it, woe to him who would take it from me." One is reminded of some noble old mastiff, holding a bone between his paws, watching if any other dog dare approach, and rob him of his own. There is a fine engraving in line of this portrait, engraved in 1788 by Richard Earlom.

Early in the following year, 1784, Reynolds was very regular in his attendance at the Hastings trial, still passing its long course. It was during this trial that Gainsborough one day, sitting with an open window at his back, felt the first symptoms of that carbuncle on his neck which so soon proved fatal.

In that year's Exhibition Reynolds had seventeen works. Among these the portrait of Lord Heathfield was *facile princeps*. Then, too, appeared on the walls of Somerset House the pretty, pert face of Lady Betty Foster, who was to succeed her friend, Georgiana, as Duchess of Devonshire. This is the kit-cat portrait at Althorp.

Gainsborough, who had been sinking rapidly through the summer from the gathering in his neck, realising that death was near, felt that before the end he must see once more his friend, the President; for, in spite of his sulks with the Academy and its head, Gainsborough had never openly quarrelled with Sir Joshua, nor had he any justification for doing so. Reynolds, in sitting to his brother of the brush, just before the illness which necessitated his leaving his sittings and going to Bath, had, by not returning to Gainsborough to have the portrait completed, possibly given some umbrage to Gainsborough's irritable humour. Be that as it may, the two great artists were not then, and had never been, on terms of friendship; but now things had changed, and Gainsborough, feeling, as has been said, that his end was drawing near, wrote him a letter from his death-bed—a letter which should, from the touching affection with which it is full, make amends for all the past touchiness and irritability that may then have lain on his conscience. The letter, which is not dated, but was written probably at the end of July, is, by the courtesy of the Council of the Royal Academy, now published for the first time.

Hanfstängl photo] [*Duke of Devonshire*

LADY BETTY FOSTER

"Dear Sir Joshua,

I am just to write what I fear you will not read, after lying in a dying state for 6 months, the extreme affection which I am informed by a friend which Sir Joshua has expressed induces me to beg a last favour which is to come over under my Roof, and look at my things. My Woodman you never saw. What I ask now is not disagreeable to your feeling, that I may have the honour to speak to you. I can from a sincere Heart say that I always admired and sincerely loved Sir Joshua Reynolds.

THO. GAINSBOROUGH."

The last sentence in this letter must have appealed strongly to Reynolds' feelings. He visited the dying painter, and it was during that supreme interview at Schomberg House, in Pall Mall, when seated by Gainsborough's bedside, that the latter, apparently in a wandering state of mind, murmured, "We are all going to heaven, and Vandyck is of the company." "If any little jealousies had subsisted between us," said Reynolds, "they were forgotten in those moments of sincerity: and he turned towards me as one who was engrossed by the same pursuits, and who desired his good opinion by being sensible of his excellence." Gainsborough, dying, said that what he most regretted leaving was his beloved art, more especially as he now began to see what his deficiences were. The end came on the 2nd of August. Gainsborough was in his sixty-second year—one year younger than Sir Joshua. The funeral took place at Kew Churchyard, on the 9th of August. Gainsborough was placed by his own desire by the side of his friend, the painter, Joshua Kirby. The pall was borne by Reynolds, Sir William Chambers, Benjamin West, Bartolozzi, among others.

In Reynolds' fourteenth Discourse, he alluded to Gainsborough's genius in painting. "This excellent painter," he calls him, and he calls attention to his excellence in landscape as well as portrait painting.

We have now reached the year 1789. Sir Joshua had commenced the new year with his usual large number of sitters, and besides his portraits he had several large imaginary works in hand, among these *The Continence of Scipio*, a *Cymon and Iphigenia*, and a *Robin Goodfellow*. Two celebrated actresses were sitting to him, Mrs Billington and Mrs Jordan; the former Reynolds painted as St Cecilia, with an angelic choir floating round her. No painter, now that Gainsborough was no more, could compete with the President on the walls of Somerset House, where that year a dozen of his works appeared; although some new stars had arisen, among these was that extraordinarily gifted young Cornishman, John Opie; Hoppner, too, had become well known by the grace of his women's portraits, and Thomas Lawrence had given proof of his future renown.

Among Reynolds' portraits in that year's Exhibition the portrait of Sheridan, painted the year before, was the most striking. Horace Walpole writes enthusiastically about it: "It is not canvas and colour, it is animated nature. All the unaffected man and character of the admired original." But Horace Walpole condemns Sir Joshua's imaginary pictures in that exhibition, with the exception of the *Robin Goodfellow*, as being glaring. The *Robin Goodfellow* was bought by Sam. Rogers, and, after the poet-banker's death, by Lord Fitzwilliam, and is now at Milton, near Peterborough. Reynolds has placed his tricky sprite seated on a mushroom.

The *Iphigenia* is at Buckingham Palace. This has been finely engraved by Haward.

The *Continence of Scipio* is in the Gallery of the Hermitage, at St Petersburg, placed near to the Hercules picture, where there is also one of the replicas of the *Snake in the Grass*.

Hanfstängl photo] [*Buckingham Palace*

CYMON AND IPHIGENIA

According to Malone, Reynolds' friend and biographer, Sir Joshua was suddenly struck with semi-blindness, while at work on a portrait of Lady Beauchamp, during that summer. Reynolds had attained his sixty-eighth year, and had already had a warning a few years before, that his life was a threatened one. Already his oldest and dearest friends had preceded him to the grave; Garrick, Goldsmith, Johnson, Baretti, Thrale, and others; these nothing could replace, and Reynolds must have felt too that he was not to linger long before joining them.

In July the sight of his left eye was almost gone, and ten weeks later he was nearly quite blind. His niece hurried to London from Torrington, on hearing of the misfortune which had fallen on her beloved uncle. During the winter she wrote that he was better than could have been expected; "he amuses himself," she writes to a cousin, "by sometimes mending or cleaning a picture, for his ruling passion continues in full force, and he enjoys his pictures as much as ever; he enjoys company in a quiet way, and loves a game at cards as much as ever." But the *gutta serena* (cataract) made advances on the right eye, and Sir Joshua had to lay down his brush. There is something pathetic in hearing of Reynolds trying to kill the time that now hung so wearily upon him by walking up and down his vacant studio, with a canary perched on his hand. One day the bird flew away, and the half-blind old man in vain wandered round the Leicester Fields for several hours, in hopes of his little pet returning to him.

Sir Joshua passed part of the summer at his villa at Richmond, and paid Burke a visit at the end of July at Beaconsfield; he was also for a few weeks at Brighton, and visited Arundel, Cowdray and Petworth, and Chichester Cathedral. Cowdray was then, probably, the finest old palace in the south of England, with the exception of

Knole, and also full of art treasures, which, unfortunately, shortly after Reynolds had been there, perished in a fire. He admired greatly the famous "Buck Hall," the Holbeins, the Vandycks, and the miniatures by Isaac Olivers, the beautiful gardens with their "close walks," and noble avenues.

One of Sir Joshua's most perfect feminine portraits, the half-length of Mrs Braddyll, in the Hertford House Gallery, was one of the pictures which he completed before blindness overtook him. That work is still in unfaded beauty, as is also another in that splendid collection, Mrs Hoare with her child, worthy of a place beside any of the great Italian masters' Madonnas.

It was an unfortunate circumstance that while Reynolds was living on, without any hope of again taking up his brush, a misunderstanding should have arisen between him and the Royal Academy. It happened that a vacant post in the Academy was to be filled: the President favoured the candidature of Bonomi, an Italian architect, much employed at that time in England; the Academicians, however, would not have Bonomi elected, and insisted on Fuseli being appointed, and gained the day. Reynolds, greatly indignant, quitted the Presidential chair, and wrote a letter on the same day to the Council of the Academy, placing his resignation in their hands, both of his Presidentship and also his seat as Academician. The matter was submitted to the King, who sent word through Sir William Chambers that he "would be happy in Sir Joshua's continuing in the President's Chair."

Finally Sir Joshua withdrew his resignation, and resumed his office, which he continued to hold till the day of his death.

According to a letter dated March, 1790, written by Reynolds' niece, Miss Palmer, her uncle still occasionally

Mansell photo] [*Wallace Gallery*

MRS BRADDYLL

attempted to work, and even as late as 1791 he painted a portrait of C. J. Frere—but probably this was only a former work which he then retouched.

In April, 1790, some of his portraits were exhibited at Somerset House, but these, which included one of George III., dated to earlier years.

On the 10th of December, Sir Joshua gave his fifteenth and last Discourse to the Royal Academy, and bade it and the students farewell. The last words he pronounced at the close of that final address were an eulogy on the mighty master that Reynolds almost considered divine, Michael Angelo. With that name on his lips ended the professional career of our great painter. Although debarred from his favourite occupation, we find Sir Joshua at the commencement of 1791, paying his old friend Burke a visit at Beaconsfield, and also a visit to Ampthill, then lived in by Lady Upper Ossory. During the early summer he was much interested in a monument to be placed in St Paul's to Johnson, and he sat for his portrait to Breda, a Swedish painter.

In September he was staying at Beaconsfield, and was still able to walk five miles without much fatigue; but in the middle of October he wrote to ask Sir W. Chambers to take the Chair for him at the Meeting of the Academy Council. On the 5th of November he made his will, a long one, and which he wrote with his own hand. Gradually both his spirits and his appetite deserted him; he complained of much pain above the left eye, and became very low and depressed. He now could only move about his gallery when he dusted his pictures. All through the winter he was suffering from an enlargement of the liver—the actual cause of his death.

Early in the year 1792 he felt his end near, and prepared for his departure with perfect resignation. He spoke to Burke gratefully of his past life, which he said

had been a happy one. "Nothing," writes Edmund Burke to his son, "nothing can equal the tranquillity with which he views his end."

Between eight and nine on the evening of Thursday, February 23rd, Sir Joshua Reynolds passed peacefully away.

Next day, in the house in which Reynolds had lived and laboured for so many years, his great friend, Edmund Burke, wrote the following tribute to Sir Joshua's memory:—

"Last night, in the sixty-ninth year of his age, died, at his house in Leicester Fields, Sir Joshua Reynolds. His illness was long, but borne with a mild and cheerful fortitude, without the least mixture of anything irritable or querulous, agreeably to the placid and even tenure of his whole life. He had from the beginning of his malady a distinct view of his dissolution, and he contemplated it with that entire composure which nothing but the innocence, integrity, and usefulness of his life, and an unaffected submission to the will of Providence, could bestow. In this situation he had every consolation from family tenderness, which his own kindness had, indeed, well deserved. Sir Joshua Reynolds was, on very many accounts, one of the most memorable men of his time. He was the first Englishman who added the praise of the elegant arts to the other glories of his country. . . . In painting portraits he appeared not to be raised upon that platform, but to descend to it from a higher sphere. Hail! and farewell."

Burke, Malone, and Metcalfe were the executors of Sir Joshua's will. The funeral took place on the 3rd of March. It had been Reynolds' desire to be buried in St Paul's: probably the fact that Vandyck had been laid to rest in old St Paul's gave the idea and wish to him. Since the first President of the Royal Academy was

FUNERAL MEMORIAL CARD

(By permission of Sir R. Edgcumbe, Bart.)

buried in the crypt of its Cathedral, St Paul's, many later Presidents and distinguished artists have been placed near the stone which covers Reynolds' remains.

The latest, by no means the least distinguished of these, was John Everett Millais.

Much pomp was displayed at Sir Joshua Reynolds' funeral. There were ten pall-bearers; among them were the Dukes of Leeds, Dorset, and Portland. The chief mourner was Sir Joshua's nephew-in-law, Robert Gwatkin. Burke followed his dead friend to the grave side, and the Royal Academy mustered in all its numbers.

Sir Joshua left all his property and fortune to his niece, Miss Palmer, who later became Marchioness of Thomond. The fortune was a very considerable one, the greatest which had ever been made by an English artist; it amounted to over one hundred thousand pounds. Besides this Reynolds left his niece a great collection of paintings and a rare collection of drawings and studies by the great Italian and Dutch painters.

Leslie, in estimating Sir Joshua Reynolds' genius, has written that, "estimating Reynolds at his best, he stands high among the great portrait painters of the world, and has achieved as distinct a place for himself in their ranks as Titian or Tintoret, Velazquez or Rembrandt. No English painter has a place beside him in this noble array of artists except Gainsborough, who, in many technical points, may be pronounced his superior, though his range of power is far narrower."

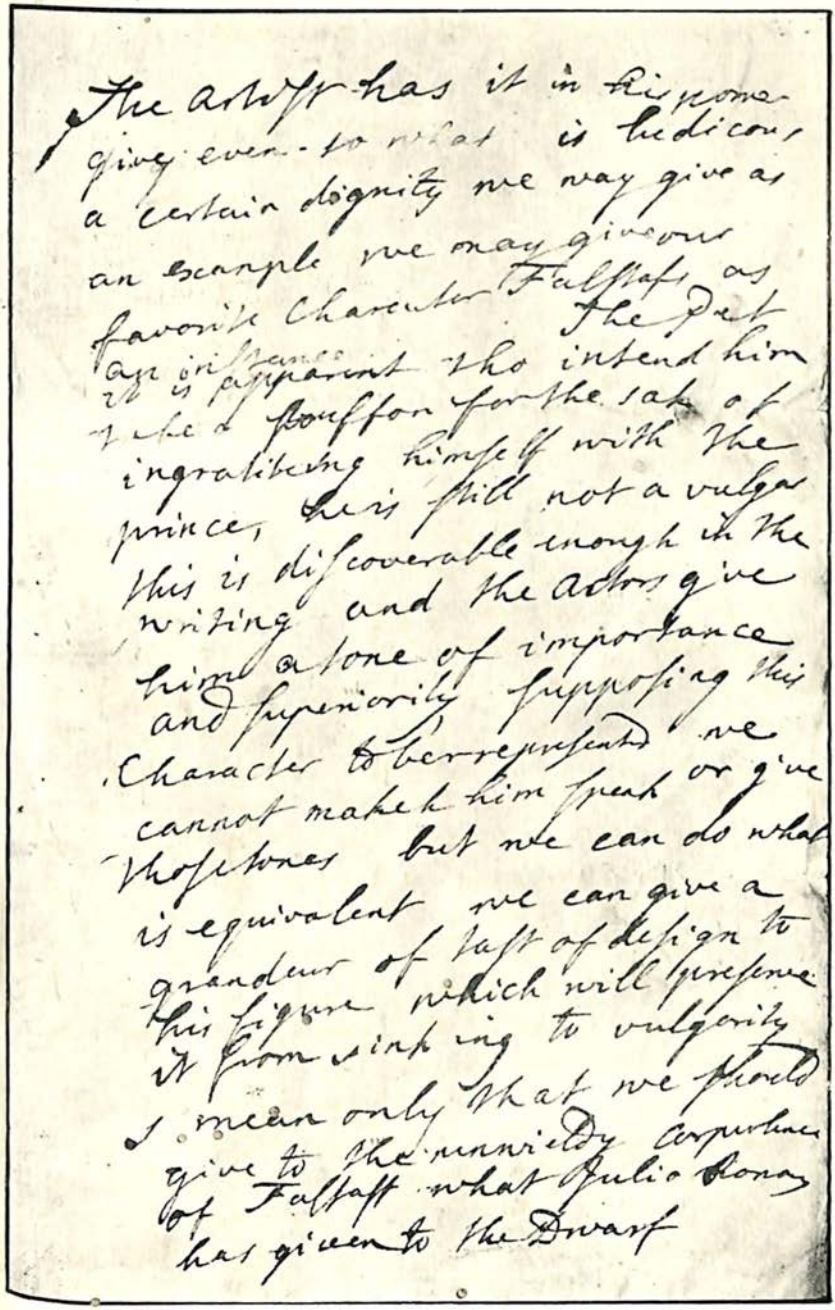
More than half-a-century has passed since the above appreciation was written by that excellent artist, Reynolds' greatest biographer, Charles Robert Leslie, and I see nothing that need be changed in that just criticism of our greatest portrait painter.

CHAPTER VIII

SIR JOSHUA'S WRITINGS AND OPINIONS ON ART

SIR JOSHUA left little or no record of his personal impressions during his journey through the Low Countries. He confined himself entirely to pictures, and his account of those he saw was to have been dedicated to his travelling companion, Philip Metcalfe. But Reynolds had only written some introductory paragraphs in which, speaking of the notes, he says, "I present them as properly your due, for if I had been accompanied by a person of less taste, or less politeness, they probably would not have been made." A remark that would tend to show that the President needed a sympathetic atmosphere for the complete enjoyment of beautiful things, even in his own art.

On entering Holland from Flanders, however, Sir Joshua leaves his *catalogue raisonné* of pictures in various collections and churches in that country, for more personal speculation and opinion. "Taking leave of Flanders," he says, "we bade adieu at the same time to History Painting. Pictures are no longer the ornament of churches, and perhaps for that reason no longer the ornament of private houses. No great historical picture is put up which excites the curiosity of the town to see, and tempts the opulent to procure as an ornament to his own house: nothing of this kind being seen, historical paintings are not thought of, and go out of


The Actor has it in his power
give even to what is ludicrous
a certain dignity we may give as
an example we may give our
favorite Character Falstaff as
he is represented in the first
part of Henry the 4th. The first
appearance of him is in company
with the Prince and Poins for the sake of
ingratiating himself with the
prince, he is still not a vulgar
this is discoverable enough in the
writing and the Actor may give
him a tone of importance
and superiority supposing this
Character to be represented we
cannot make him speak or give
those tones but we can do what
is equivalent we can give a
grandeur of taste of design to
his figure which will preserve
it from sinking to vulgarity
I mean only what we should
give to the unwieldy corpulence
of Falstaff what Julio Romano
has given to the Dwarf

SPECIMEN OF SIR JOSHUA'S WRITING

(*By permission of Sir Robert Edgcumbe, Bart.*)

fashion; and the genius of the country, which, if room were given it, would expand itself, is exercised in small, curious, high-finished cabinet pictures." The expansion according to Sir Joshua would apparently only have been in the direction of historical painting, since, in one of his discourses to the students of the Academy, he says that the Dutch and Flemish style of landscape, "not even excepting those of Rubens," was "unfit for poetical subjects."

The absence of pictures in the Dutch churches seems to have been Reynolds' first impression in Holland—the absence would be particularly striking after the Flemish churches with their varied treasures of the painter's art—and he records that "it is a circumstance to be regretted, by painters at least, that the Protestant Churches have thought proper to exclude pictures from their churches;" adding that how far this exclusion may account for the fact that no Protestant country has produced a "history painter" is a subject worthy of consideration.

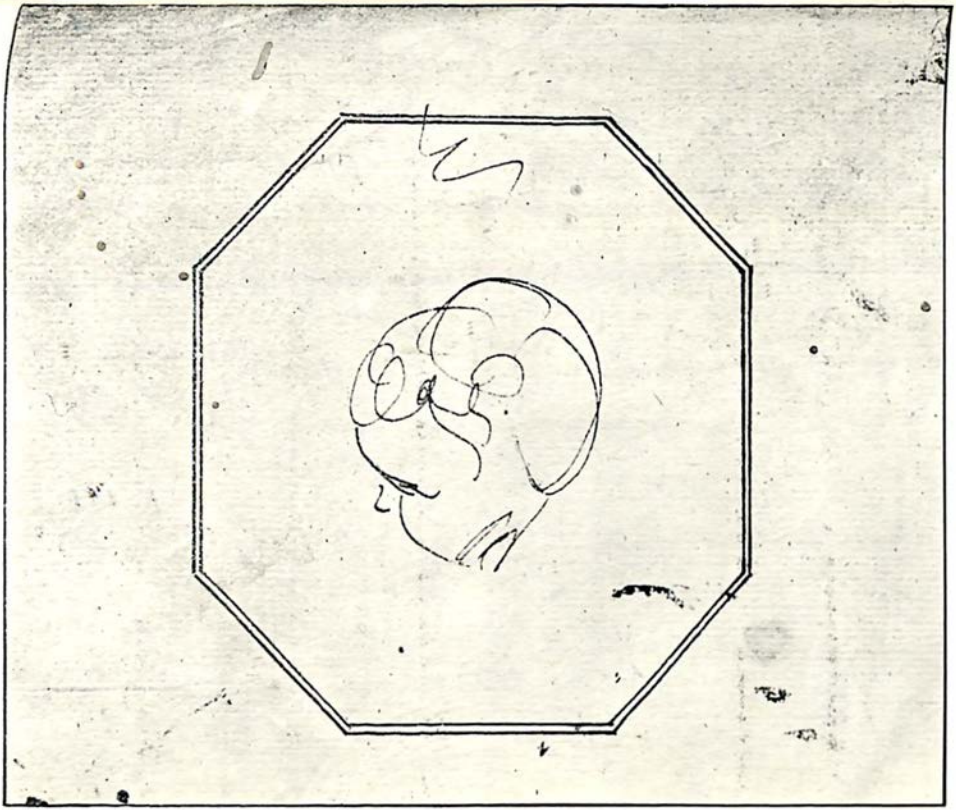
Sir Joshua evidently had a decided opinion of the effect wrought upon Art by certain forms of religion, and certainly was an advocate of church decoration, a feeling in which he was in advance of his time. "When we separated," he says, "from the Church of Rome, many customs indifferent in themselves were considered as wrong, for no other reason perhaps but because they were adopted from the Communion from which we separated. Among the excesses which this sentiment produced, may be reckoned the impolitic exclusion of all ornaments from our churches. The violence and acrimony with which the separation was made being now at an end, it is high time to assume that reason of which our zeal seems to have bereaved us. Why religion should not appear pleasing and amiable in its appendages, why the house of God should not appear as well

ornamented and as costly as any private house made for man, no good reason, I believe, can be assigned." From the lack of church decoration in England in his time, Sir Joshua passes to the neglect of sculpture, which "languishes," he says, because it is not made subservient to religion, adding, "that almost the only demand for considerable works of sculpture arise from the monuments erected to eminent men." And it is in these Flemish and Dutch notes that he makes the suggestion that monuments to the distinguished dead should be erected in St Paul's in place of Westminster Abbey, which was already full, and "if the House of Commons should vote another monument at the public expense, there is no place, no proper place certainly, in the Abbey, in which it can be placed." Malone, in a footnote to this paper, says that Reynolds considered his idea as likely to be so beneficial to the arts that after it had been decided to erect a monument to Dr Johnson in Westminster Abbey, and a place had been chosen, he used all his influence with his friends to persuade them to give up the Abbey in favour of St. Paul's, and with successful result. It was in accordance with his own wish that the President was buried in the Cathedral and not in the Abbey.

Sir Joshua's opinions upon art are to be found chiefly in his Discourses to the Students of the Academy, none of his letters affording those glimpses into his ideals and methods so common in the correspondence of his contemporaries. Northcote says of him "that he never conversed. If he made an observation, he did it in a hasty, half pettish manner, and seemed to employ as few words as he could." Northcote once pointed out to Sir Joshua that whereas the President always used lake, which faded, in his pictures, Sir Godfrey Kneller used vermilion. "What signifies what a man used who could

SKETCH FOR A PICTURE

(By permission of Sir Robert Edgcumbe, Bart.)



ROUGH SKETCH FOR THE HEAD OF A CHILD
(*By permission of Sir Robert Edgcumbe, Bart.*)

not colour?" was all the reply Sir Joshua made. "And when his sister one day said to him. "Brother, I wonder what is become of all Jervas' pictures?" he answered sharply, "Because they are all in the garret." "These are specimens of Sir Joshua's conversation," says Northcote. "He didn't wish to shine in conversation; he had another object in view, and had no time for talking." In another conversation Northcote says of Sir Joshua, that although "he kept so much company, no one had his confidence, and that he was an isolated being." His art was his only object in life, so much so that on one occasion when a newspaper stated that "Dr Johnson, Goldsmith, Sir Joshua Reynolds and the other wits were there," he was much annoyed, and cried, "What do they mean by calling me a wit? I never was a wit in my life." "He well knew," adds the observant Northcote, "that to make the world afraid of him would be ruinous to his profession."

Sir Joshua was calm and equable by temperament, and it was one of his maxims that we should never be annoyed by trifles; he used to say that by an effort of will he could always banish disagreeable things from his mind, and fix his thoughts upon other subjects. It was in this manner that he received the attacks made upon him by the newspaper critics, but that he did not forget such attacks, especially from brother-artists, is shown by his reference in the paper he wrote on Dr Johnson's character, to "a club at a little ale-house," formed by the lexicographer. "It was composed," says Reynolds, "of a strange mixture of very learned and very ingenious odd people." And after mentioning some of the members dismisses the remainder with, "Those of the latter I do not think proper to enumerate." Barry the painter, who had grossly attacked him, was one of the "ingenious odd people," and it was

for this reason, it was said, that Reynolds himself did not join the Club, which was misrepresented by Sir John Hawkins, "as if it had been a low ale-house association by which Johnson was degraded."

Sir Joshua's industry was phenomenal. "He looked constantly to one goal before him, and suffered nothing to turn his attention from it; no pleasure, no feelings of any kind were allowed to stand in the way." Amongst his brother-artists he was famous for his mechanical dexterity, but this was only gained by constant drawing from models, and from his own head as seen in a mirror—he is said to have sketched himself hundreds of times. This rapidity of hand was one of the causes of his success in painting children's portraits. He would romp and play with them as if he were a child himself, and in the midst of a "grand racket" would snatch those fleeting lights of expression which give his portraits of children their incomparable and undying charm. "It was a beautiful sight to see Sir Joshua paint," says Northcote, "for he did it with such a graceful facility." Despite his views upon Art, which are scarcely in accord with the accepted canons of to-day, Sir Joshua had an unerring instinct for picturesque incident, and his pictures have been justly described as being like Nature, "perfectly various." Fashion bowed to Sir Joshua, not Sir Joshua to Fashion, and when he was asked if he did not find the high powdered head-dresses worn by his lady sitters "harassing to paint," he replied that on the contrary they gave him the opportunity of further effects in light and shade.

Mention has already been made of the ruinous state into which some of Sir Joshua's pictures have fallen owing to his incessant use of megilp to produce a soft surface. Some of his work began to show signs of his mistake within a few years of its accomplishment, and yet, as Northcote says, "How difficult it is to ruin one of Sir

BOOK PLATE OF SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

(By permission of Sir Robert Edgcumbe, Bart.)

Joshua's pictures!" The following criticism applies to almost all the President's work: "I remember seeing his portrait of the Earl of Carlisle—a whole length, representing that nobleman walking down steps, and habited as a Knight of the Thistle. I saw it at Jackson's. It was in a shameful state; it was cracked and faded from the varnishes and nostrums that Sir Joshua had made use of, and yet the picture had still all those qualities which Sir Joshua can never be without—it had grace, simplicity, and beautiful arrangement. He forced his pictures out by such brilliant effects that even the very ghosts of them remain fine, whereas a picture by Vandyck in such a state as that which I saw at Jackson's, would certainly be done for."

Amongst Sir Joshua's papers and memoranda after his death was found this observation, "I formerly used to think that painters were the best judges of pictures, as a jeweller is of diamonds, but I now find that they are not so." Northcote quotes this opinion as evidence of his statement that Sir Joshua would never associate with inferior painters, "he always kept aloof from them, and was determined to converse with none but first-rate minds, such as Johnson, and Burke, and Goldsmith." It is not improbable that Sir Joshua arrived at this opinion by the attacks made on his own work by painters, some of whom were the bitterest and most malevolent of critics, as much as by the craze of the period for the indifferent artists of the later Italian schools.

The question has not arisen in our time, but early in the nineteenth century there was much controversy as to the width, decoration, and size of the frames of pictures sent for exhibition to the Academy. Northcote flatly accuses Sir Thomas Lawrence of having brought in this fashion of "gaudiness;" holding up the first President as

an example in this respect: "I do assure you, Sir Joshua had nothing of this; for the frames in which he sent his fancy pictures were not above two inches in depth, and his portraits were sent in such frames as his sitters provided for them. And Sir Joshua's frames went year after year. One frame in particular, I remember, had gone so often that it might almost have found its way to the Exhibition alone, and it had become so black that you could scarcely have known that it had ever been gilt." "But a good frame," observed Miss Northcote, "tends to greatly improve the appearance of a picture." "To be sure it does," continued her brother, with a snappishness worthy of his dead friend, the President, "so much so, that a common sign would look well in such frames as are now sent to the Exhibition, and I can only say that it's a piece of quackery that was never thought of by Sir Joshua."

Sir Joshua Reynolds' Discourses to the Students of the Royal Academy were considered at the time at which they were given as most valuable aids to the study of art. His opinions of certain schools and painters, notably of Correggio and the Carracci brothers, are wholly at variance with the trend of art opinion to-day; and it is surprising that a painter in whose pictures a vivid naturalness constitutes their first charm, should have seen the masterpieces of the early Italian painters with so cold an eye.

Sir Joshua was at considerable pains to point out to the students, as Hazlitt puts it, that "all beauty, grace, and grandeur are to be found not in actual nature, but in an idea existing in the mind." And yet no English painter ever seized upon the beauty and grace of children with so sure a pencil, or transferred the grandeur of some of his sitters—especially Mrs Siddons as the Tragic Muse—with such faithful stateliness as he himself.

Apart from opinions that no longer concern an age in which the general knowledge of art is infinitely wider, and

Mansell photo] [*National Gallery*

A LADY AND HER CHILD

Hanfstängl photo] [*National Gallery*

ROBINETTA

[*Hanfstängl photo*] [*National Gallery*

THE AGE OF INNOCENCE

in which opinion is not overshadowed by the pseudo-classicalism of the eighteenth century, these Discourses tend in their advice to the perpetuation of mediocrity amongst painters. First comes the advocating of the idea that imagination is superior to Nature as a source of the artist's inspiration, followed by the pronouncement that industry and continual study make the great artist rather than genius: "You must have no dependence on your own genius," says Sir Joshua in his second Discourse—that "On the Methods of Study." "If you have great talents, industry will improve them; if you have but moderate abilities, industry will supply their deficiency. Nothing is denied to well-directed labour; nothing is to be obtained without it. Not to enter into metaphysical discussions on the nature or essence of genius, I will venture to assert that assiduity unabated by difficulty, and a disposition eagerly directed to the object of pursuit, will produce effects similar to those which some call the result of natural powers." Such a statement is tantamount to saying that industry alone will produce the works of genius, and, as Hazlitt very justly observes, "Industry alone can only produce mediocrity; but mediocrity in art is not worth the trouble of industry. Genius, great natural powers, will give industry and ardour in the pursuit of their proper object, but not if you direct them from that object into the trammels of common-place mechanical labour. By this method you neutralise all distinction of character—make a pedant of a blockhead, and a drudge of a man of genius."

Sir Joshua himself was a living example of the heights to which genius may attain when aided by unceasing industry; and so unbalanced an opinion as he expresses in this Discourse can surely only have arisen from a belief that his own powers were the outcome of "assiduity," rather than "highly cultivated natural gifts."

Throughout the Discourses Sir Joshua seems to insist that every great artist has formed himself by the study of the works of his predecessors, and that "the daily food and nourishment of the mind of the Artist must be found in the works of his predecessors;" and "that by imitation only, variety and even originality is produced;" adding, "I will go further: even genius, at least, what is so-called, is the child of imitation." Yet in speaking of Carlo Maratti, after detailing all the masters of painting at whose feet he sat in whole-souled imitation, Sir Joshua says, "Carlo by diligence made the most of what he had; but there was undoubtedly a heaviness about him, which extended itself uniformly to his invention, expression, his drawing, colouring, and the general effect of his pictures. The truth is, he never equalled any of his patterns in any one thing, and he added little of his own." This description scarcely supports Sir Joshua's assertion that "assiduity will produce effects similar to those which some call the result of natural powers." The President's inconsistency of theory is further shown by his advice to the students to study Nature, after he propounded the idea that "all beauty, grace, and grandeur, are to be found, not in actual Nature, but in an idea existing in the mind." "He who recurs to Nature," he says at the conclusion of the twelfth Discourse, "at every recurrence renews his strength. The rules of art he is never likely to forget, they are few and simple; but Nature is refined, subtle, and infinitely various, beyond the power and retention of memory. It is necessary, therefore, to have continual recourse to her. In this intercourse there is no end to his improvement: the longer he lives the nearer he approaches to the true and perfect idea of art."

Happily Sir Joshua's inconsistencies and opposed opinions on art were confined to these Discourses.

H.R.H. PRINCE WILLIAM FREDERICK OF GLOUCESTER.

(From the engraving by C. Watson)

CHAPTER IX

ENGRAVERS AFTER SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS' WORKS.

HORACE WALPOLE complains on some occasion of the rise in the value of engravings, for whereas a few years before he could buy a mezzotint for a few shillings, he was then obliged to spend as many pounds on one. What would he say could he be told of the hundreds that one of these mezzotints now fetch at Christie's? Reynolds often declared that the engravings of McArdell would immortalise his pictures; he might have also named a dozen other engravers who have made some of his finest portraits of world-wide renown.

The earliest mezzotint engravings from a portrait by Reynolds are those of Lady Charlotte Fitzwilliam and Anne Dawson, in the character of Diana. Both these engravings bear the date 1746, and are from the burin of McArdell, Reynolds' first, and, apparently, favourite engraver, and whose mezzotints Sir Joshua considered gave the truest impression of his style.

There were some seven hundred engravings after Reynolds' works in existence half-a-century ago; there may be now over a thousand.

On the engravers of Sir Joshua's time the greatest authority is Dr Edward Hamilton, who has written in his *Catalogue Raisonné* of Sir Joshua Reynolds' engraved pictures, that "to possess such works is to live with Reynolds and his time; to study them is to nourish and

improve the taste; while at the same time we are led to regret that this art, as then practised, should have passed away with the men who brought it to such perfection."

Although no living engraver can compete in excellence with the great mezzotint engravers of the latter part of the eighteenth century, England possessed, till 1887, one who was almost as great as any of those, namely, Samuel Cousins. Born in 1801, Cousins' work is equal to some of the great engravers of an earlier generation, and his transcripts of Lawrence and Landseer's paintings are works of the highest art. When it is remembered that some four thousand authenticated pictures by Reynolds exist, the labour of compiling a *Catalogue Raisonné*, as has been carried out by Messrs Graves and Cronin can be imagined; their Catalogue is in itself a Memorial of the great Master it commemorates.

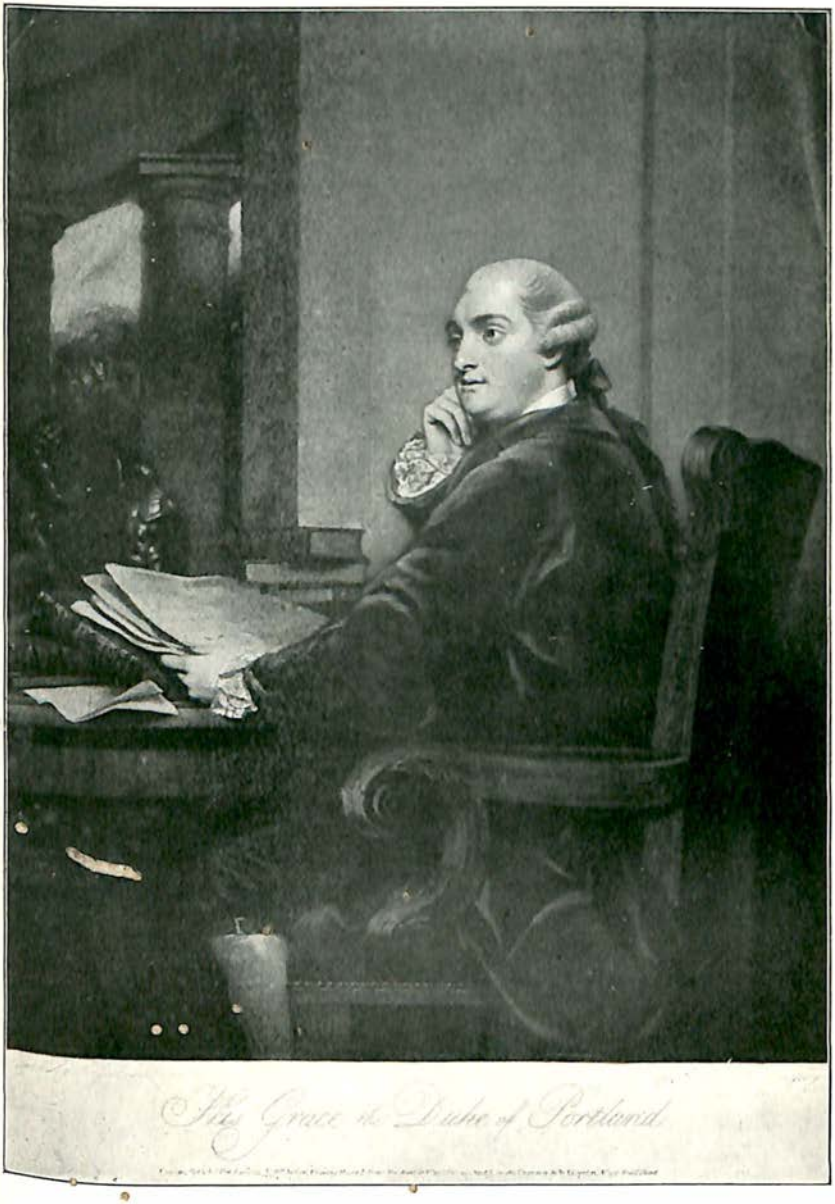
To give even a list of all the paintings attributed to Reynolds would be impossible in a book of this size. The following is a list of the principal engravers of Sir Joshua Reynolds' paintings :—

BARTOLOZZI, FRANCIS, R.A.
DEAN, JOHN.
DICKINSON, WILLIAM.
DIXON, JOHN.
EARLOM, RICHARD.
FISHER, EDWARD.
GREEN, VALENTINE.
HAWARD, FRANCIS.
HODGES, C. H.
HOUSTON, RICHARD.
JONES, JOHN.
MCARDELL, JAMES.
REYNOLDS, S. W.
SHERWIN, J. K.
SMITH, JOHN RAPHAEL.
WARD, WILLIAM.
WATSON, J.
WATSON, THOMAS.
WATTS, JOHN.

[*Oxford University Gallery*

JAMES PAINE, THE ARCHITECT, AND HIS SON.

(*From the mezzotint by Watson*)



THE DUKE OF PORTLAND

(From the mezzotint by Murphy)

CHAPTER X.

THE GALLERY AND SALE-ROOM.

THOSE who had the privilege of seeing the collection of Sir Joshua Reynolds' works, brought together by Sir Coutts Lindsay, in the winter of 1883–4 in Bond Street, will not readily have forgotten that fine gathering, the greatest which had ever been brought together of the master's works. There one saw what Robert Louis Stevenson, writing of an exhibition of Raeburn's portraits in Edinburgh, called "a whole generation of good society resuscitated." In the galleries of the Grosvenor Gallery, one seemed to live among all that was most distinguished, learned, and beautiful, of those who had made the long reign of George III. one of the most distinguished in our country's history. One stood face to face with such men of action as the great circumnavigator, Lord Anson, Admiral Lord Keppel, and the heroic Heathfield; with statesmen such as Edmund Burke, Warren Hastings, Sheridan, and Thurlow; with literary geniuses, such as Oliver Goldsmith, Johnson, and Baretti; with the greatest of actors and actresses, Garrick and Siddons; and with a galaxy of beauty, conspicuous among whom shone the Duchesses of Devonshire and Rutland, the lovely Mrs Crewe and Mrs Sheridan, and lesser beauties such as *Perdita* Robinson, Kitty Fisher, Mrs Abingdon, and Nelly O'Brien.

Perhaps what even exceeded in charm these portraits

of famous men and beautiful women, were the portraits of children, many of which could only be qualified by the term of perfection.

In that exhibition there were over two hundred of Sir Joshua's works. Among them were nine portraits of Reynolds by himself, for Sir Joshua loved to study his features, and he is known to have painted his likeness from his seventeenth year onwards, and in this respect he followed the example of his great master, Rembrandt. We can trace him from the long-haired boy, in the chalk of himself at Nuneham, down to the end of his life, with his heavy-rimmed spectacles, and his grey hair frizzed out and powdered.

On the whole this exhibition was satisfactory in showing that although many of the Master's works are now mere wrecks of what they once were, the majority are still in good condition. Some, indeed, appear almost as fresh and glowing in colour as when they left his studio over a century and a half ago.

Seventy years before the Exhibition of the Grosvenor Gallery, some of Reynolds' works had been exhibited by the Directors of the British Institution, which, up to that time, was the largest collection that had been brought together.

It appears necessary to the British mind that the stomach should participate in all great exhibitions, whether of paintings or politics, and a banquet was held previous to the opening of Reynolds' works in Willis's Rooms, which the Regent attended. He was received by the President, the Marquis of Stafford, and the Governors. The Prince was placed below a statue by Flaxman of Sir Joshua. Among the guests were Mrs Siddons, who had come, probably, to see how she looked as the Queen of Tragedy in her portrait; Lord Byron was also of the company.

PETERSHAM FROM RICHMOND HILL [*Lord Northbrook*

(*By special permission of Mr Algernon Graves*)

The first considerable sale of Reynolds' paintings took place in 1816, when after Mrs Piozzi's (better known as Mrs Thrale) death the collection painted by Reynolds for Mr Thrale at Streatham, was dispersed. Of these there were a dozen; most of them sold for ludicrously small sums, ranging from £20 to £200. The portrait of Sir Joshua by himself fetched 122 guineas, Garrick's 175, Burke's 240, and that of Dr Johnson 360; that portrait was again sold in 1825, and was bought by Mr Watson Taylor for £493. It was sold again to Sir Robert Peel, and is now in the National Gallery.

In May, 1821, after the death of Sir Joshua's niece, Lady Thomond, a great sale of his works took place at Christie's.

After Samuel Rogers' death in 1856, many of Sir Joshua Reynolds' paintings from the poet-banker's fine collection came into the market. The then Miss Burdett-Coutts bought one of a group of children, similar to that in the famous *Infant Academy*, which had belonged to Lord Palmerston, and was till lately at Brockett; the famous *Strawberry Girl* was bought by Lord Hertford for 2100 guineas, and is now in Hertford House; there was a duplicate of this which belonged to Lord Lansdowne, and was bought from Sir Joshua by Lord Carysfort for fifty guineas. The *Sleeping Girl*, now at Lord Northbrook's place, Stratton Park, near Worcester, and which Northcote calls Reynolds' "richest performance," fetched only 157 guineas. Dr Wolcot had given Sir Joshua fifty for this wonderfully brilliant piece of painting; it was bought by Rogers from the Doctor. When it was exhibited in 1787 Northcote wrote that "it seemed to annihilate every picture near it." Lord Northbrook is also the happy owner of one of Reynolds' very rare landscapes — and the best we have seen of such a subject, it is called *A Study from the*

window of Sir Joshua's Villa at Richmond Hill. The fine landscape had been bought by Rogers at Lady Thomond's sale for 155 guineas; it was sold at Rogers' sale for 430.

The prices paid in recent years for paintings by Sir Joshua seem amazing; but compared to what is now paid for fine examples of mezzotints after his works, they appear to us not excessive.

In an interesting article by Mr W. Roberts in the magazine the "Nineteenth Century," August 1901, on the "Craze for Mezzotints," is a list of the prices paid at Christie's for mezzotints after Reynolds' portraits.

The highest prices paid for his portraits has been 11,000 guineas for that of Lady Betty Delmè with her children, and for Miss Monckton (afterwards Lady Cork), 7500. The group of the Waldegrave sisters is supposed to have cost £20,000; and Lady Cockburn and her children, £22,000.

In 1887 the Duke of Buccleuch sold his collection of mezzotints after Reynolds; the sale lasted twelve days, and realised £33,000; that collection is said to have cost one fourth of that sum. The Buccleuch collection was the finest ever brought together of Sir Joshua's engravings; it filled seventeen folios, containing two thousand prints.

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